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ABSTRACT

This guide describes what states can do to support and encourage the fundamental restructuring of the education of young adolescents in the middle grades. Its framework is based on the eight principles for restructuring middle grade education developed in "Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century," prepared by the Carnegie Corporation Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents (1990). The guide illustrates state policies and actions that can help middle grade schools implement each principle. While this eight-part framework is an organizational aide to identifying specific actions for each principle, all principles are interrelated. State policies should not be considered sequentially: a specific policy related to one principle may well be relevant to other "Turning Points" principles. Three items are appended, including a report of academic performance from New York State schools for representative curriculum areas, featuring mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies. (DFR)

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State Policies to Support Middle School Reform: A Guide for Policymakers

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Council of Chief State School Officers

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Council of Chief State School Officers

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide non-profit organization of the public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, and five extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO seeks its members? consensus on major educational issues and expresses their view to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public. Through its structure of standing and special committees, the Council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major education issues.

Because the Council represents the chief education administrators, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and to the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other education organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect matters vital to the education of America's young people.

CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity

The CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity provides services designed to achieve equity and high-quality education for minorities, women and girls, and for disabled, limited English proficient, and low-income students. The Center is responsible for managing and staffing a variety of CCSSO leadership initiatives to ensure educational success for all children and youth, especially those placed at-risk.

Since October 1990, Resource Center staff has worked under contract with the Carnegie Corporation of New York to provide technical assistance and analytical and other support services to assist state grantees of the Corporation's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative. This state grant program is a major effort designed to implement reforms in the education of young adolescents called for in Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century. Effective October 1, 1997, the National Center on Public Education and Social Policy at the University of Rhode Island assumed the role of managing the project. This Shift is a result of a decision by Carnegie Corporation that the Initiative will become a self-directed network.

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The purpose of this Guide is to describe what states can do to support and encourage the fundamental restructuring of the education of young adolescents (ages 10-15) in the middle grades. Its framework is based upon the eight principles for restructuring middle grade education originally put forth by *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, the 1990 report of the Carnegie Corporation Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. This Guide illustrates state policies and actions that can enable middle grade schools to implement each principle.

While this eight-part framework is an organizational aide to identifying specific actions for each principle, all principles are interrelated. State policies should not be considered sequentially—implementing one principle before action is taken on the others. A specific policy related to one principle may well be relevant to other Turning Points principles. Readers will find, for example, that professional development for incumbent teachers (pages 24-36) has clear implications for creating a climate for learning (pages 8-13) and for transmitting a common core of knowledge to all students (pages 14-23). In deciding how they will support reform of adolescent education, state policymakers will want to approach middle grade reform comprehensively so that all principles are implemented in combination with each other.

State policies emanate from several sources, not just the state department of education. The governor, members of the legislature, and other state agencies also influence the ability of educators, parents, and community institutions to bring about school change. Suggestions for state policies offered in this Guide are based on actual initiatives pursued in many states, including, but not limited to, those states that have piloted middle grade reform using the principles of *Turning Points*. In some cases, these initiatives were not undertaken specifically for middle grades, but they are applicable to that grade span.

This Guide is intended for state policymakers. However, it will also be useful to teachers, principals, parents, central office administrators, and school board members who are considering or undertaking middle grade restructuring. Public education is a joint state and local enterprise. Local officials and parents need to know which state practices may be inhibiting change and what kinds of reforms in state regulations and practices are necessary and desirable to support their efforts.

Individual schools have struggled to obtain better outcomes for young adolescents by implementing *Turning Points* recommendations. A few districts have undertaken to transform all their middle schools. Four national foundations—the Carnegie Corporation, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Lilly Endowment—have provided considerable resources to support middle grade reform. The Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) Resource Center on Educational Equity has provided technical assistance to the Carnegie Corporation's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI). In an article in the March 1997 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, officers of the four foundations reflected on their collective experience with middle grade reform. They found some promising changes at the state level, but

> for the most part...few states have crafted a coherent plan to ensure that all adolescents attend schools that are structured, staffed, and equipped to foster their success. States must now define a coherent vision of what policies are needed at the state, district, and school levels to achieve a high-performing system that helps develop high-performing students.[1]

CCSSO has produced this Guide in order to assist states in working toward a comprehensive and systemic set of policies that will achieve that coherent vision.

We express our deep appreciation to the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI) State Directors and other key individuals involved in the Initiative at the state and local levels, collectively known as State Leaders. The current state leaders are listed below and their full addresses are in Appendix C.These individuals, and in some cases their predecessors as well, provided the information on which this Guide is based or assisted in obtaining it. The Guide was prepared under the direction of Cynthia G. Brown, Director of the Resource Center on Educational Equity. It was written by Phyllis McClure, an independent consultant, with the assistance of Carlos Espinoza, former MGSSPI Associate, Anthony W. Jackson, Executive Director of the MGSSPI and Program Officer at the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Gayle Andrews Davis, MGSSPI Director and former MGSSPI Senior Associate, and Burton M. Taylor, Senior Consultant to the Resource Center, contributed thoughtful comments and advice in its preparation.Funding for the publication was provided by Carnegie Corporation of New York; however, the views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent those of the Corporation.

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The Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI), established in 1990, is a multi-year effort in 15 states and two other jurisdictions* to support reform of middle grades education in accordance with the recommendations of the Carnegie Corporation Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. The 1990 report of the *Task Force, Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, calls for the transformation of middle schools or junior high schools so that they better meet the needs of young adolescents.

Early adolescence is the turning point between childhood and young adulthood. Barely past childhood, young teens have adult powers of reproduction but not the adult capacity for reasoning and self control. They are torn between their desire for independence and rebellion, while at the same time craving adult understanding and guidance. Normal developmental changes at this age coincide with the requirements for intellectual accomplishments and concentrated work habits.

Too many young people in the 10 to 15 year-old age group are at great risk of dropping out of school, becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs, experimenting with risky sexual behavior, and engaging in anti-social and criminal behavior. Many who continue to participate in school do so at such a low level that, even if they move on to high school, they lack the academic preparation to succeed and graduate. The risks for young adolescents are present in all communities, but they are especially prevalent among those from chronically poor families, whether they are in the inner-city, small towns, or rural communities.

The traditional organization and curriculum of middle grades are ill suited for most young adolescents' emotional, intellectual, and interpersonal needs. As *Turning Points* describes this mismatch:

> [T]he shift from elementary to junior high or middle school means moving from a small neighborhood school and the stability of one primary classroom to a much larger, more impersonal institution, typically at greater distance from home. In this setting, teachers and classmates will change as many as six or seven times a day. This constant shifting creates formidable barriers to the formation of stable peer groups and close, supportive relationships with caring adults. The chances that young people will feel lost are enormous ...T]heir involvement with learning diminishes and their rates of alienation, drug abuse, absenteeism and dropping out begin to rise.[1]

These conditions led the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development to propose a fundamental restructuring of schooling for young adolescents based on eight principles. They are:

1. Large middle grade schools are divided into smaller communities for learning.
2. Middle grade schools transmit a core of common knowledge to all students.
3. All students have the opportunity to succeed in the middle grade program, regardless of previous achievement or the pace at which they learn.
4. Teachers and principals have major responsibility and power to transform middle grade schools.
5. Teachers for the middle grades are specifically prepared to teach young adolescents.
6. Schools promote good health; the education and health of young adolescents are inextricably linked.
7. Families are reengaged in the education of young adolescents.
8. Schools and communities share responsibility for each middle grade student's success.

As the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative evolved, three of the eight original *Turning Points* principles were revised. The revised principles and five original ones form the organizational framework of this Guide, as reflected in the Table of Contents. Professional development of the existing teacher workforce was made an explicit part of the third principle, ensuring success for all children. In addition, the seventh and eighth principles were seen as logically compatible and thus were combined. The eighth principle became "Middle school reform must be comprehensive and sustained."

American public education is a joint enterprise of state and local governments. Two hundred thirty schools in 15 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are in various stages of implementing the recommendations of *Turning Points* through MGSSPI grants from the Carnegie Corporation. While these reforms can be and have been undertaken by local educators, state policies can either frustrate or promote their efforts. Changes in the education of young adolescents are occurring simultaneously with reforms at all grade levels.

Currently, the state education improvement movement arises from the dissatisfaction of parents, the public, and employers with the low level of achievement demonstrated by American students. Surveys of public attitude show that respondents want more emphasis placed on higher student achievement. Employers find that entry-level workers lack adequate ability to compute, write, and solve problems. Higher education institutions find that large numbers of students are not prepared for college-level work. Business and political leaders worry that American students fare poorly incomparisons with students in other industrialized nations, placing this country at a distinct disadvantage in global economic competition.

High expectations for student learning, reformers argue, now apply only to students who are college bound, leaving all other students to muddle through a curriculum that does not equip them with the types of

skills and knowledge that the workplace and the larger society call for in the 21st century. Instead, proponents argue, we must raise expectations for students, parents, and teachers and accompany them with a greater focus on depth of understanding and the ability to apply knowledge. Memorizing facts and formulae and filling in blanks on work sheets must be replaced by demonstrating that students can produce well-written essays, solve real-world problems, apply scientific and technological principles, and engage in their own reasoning.

Most current practice assumes that human ability is a fixed and permanent quotient. Slow learners are taught less, and at the end of the year our low expectations are confirmed when they achieve less. Instructional theory of the past, but now disproven, holds that learning proceeds in stages from low-level skills to the more sophisticated skills of thinking and reasoning and that some students can never reach the latter stages. More recent research on how young people learn shows that the academic achievement of low-performing students can be improved when comprehension and critical thinking skills are taught together with simple proficiencies such as computation and spelling.

Raising expectations involves more than mandating that students take challenging subjects—algebra instead of business math for eighth graders, for example. Teachers who have little background in a subject and who have never taught it must be trained. They need practice with different instructional approaches. A new curriculum must be introduced and new assessments designed. Perhaps most essential is helping students and their parents appreciate the importance of more challenging subjects to the child's future options in life.

Most state governments have assumed the lead in forging a consensus about the skills and knowledge young people will require in the next century to be productive members of society as parents, contributors to the new economy, and as participants in a democracy. This consensus, in the form of standards or curriculum frameworks, sets the norm for what all students are expected to learn, how teachers are trained and certified, and what is assessed. Local districts and schools have freedom to develop their curriculum and organize instruction so that their students will achieve the expected standards.

The emerging consensus, contained in state education improvement statutes, reflects the principles advocated by *Turning Points*, for this particular age group.

Every state has a tradition of local control over education. State standards are not meant to preempt local control but rather to set goals by which state and local officials can function in a systematic and coordinated fashion. State officials have found that reforms mandated by the legislature or state board of education are best implemented with the involvement and consultation of local school officials, teachers, parents, and business and community interests. People at the state and local levels have to find ways to work together to implement reforms, while respecting the prerogatives and legal responsibilities of each sphere of government.

Standards-based reform requires states to focus more on building the capacity of schools and districts to implement reforms and to measure the results. States are recognizing that many of their old rules and regulations may inhibit or discourage schools from reforming their practices. In the traditional organization of public education into elementary and secondary, middle schools are neither one nor the other. The principles advocated by *Turning Points* illustrate how the emerging movement for standards-based reform can transform the way schools treat young adolescents.

Finally, some state education officials are coordinating more closely with their counterparts in agencies responsible for public health, abused or neglected children, and family-centered services. States can organize health, social services, and education in ways to provide better assistance to students and their families through innovative funding mechanisms and local partnerships of service providers. States can play a powerful role in promoting knowledge about how children learn through disseminating research and information to the professional community, to parents, and to the public at large.

- Environments for students and teachers are conducive to learning
- Opportunities give students a sense of belonging and the capacity to acquire healthy lifestyles and interpersonal relationships.

Schools that are communities for learning create an environment in which teachers and students best perform their respective jobs—teaching and learning. Teachers work together as colleagues in planning and delivering instruction. Students have a secure and stable climate that permits them to participate actively in learning the full curriculum and to acquire personal habits that support their physical, psychological and mental development. Students establish closer ties with each other and with their teachers. Time is organized to support students as learners.

High Schools for "Juniors"

Organization of the traditional school serving young adolescents is counterproductive to their intellectual and socio-emotional development. As the name "junior" high implies, schools for this age group are typically constructed like high schools. The school day is planned around individual subjects in the curriculum, often state-mandated, for five or six periods. Students move through the schedule from one room to another, one subject to another, every 40 or 50 minutes. In five periods, each teacher sees 150 or so different students. Students have five or six different teachers.

This regimen does not allow students and teachers to develop strong interpersonal relationships. It breaks up the curriculum into separate and distinct categories of learning, precluding teachers from integrating topics and reinforcing skills across disciplines. Moving students through hallways and up and down stairways every hour exacerbates discipline problems. The larger the student body, the more hectic and impersonal the environment.

Middle grade students usually have a wide range of achievement levels. A significant percentage of students, especially in high-poverty communities, may have substantial academic deficiencies. Youngsters new to the country may lack any fluency in reading and speaking English. The typical, traditional response to this kind of diverse student body is to assign students to achievement or ability levels. A sixth grade class is sub-divided based on prior achievement, thus separating accomplished readers from those who read at the third grade level.

Grouping practices vary, as do the terms used to describe them. But the kind of sorting that provides some students, but not others, with access to the full curriculum is the antithesis of an environment conducive to learning. Such practices suggest that educators hold different expectations for what particular students should be able to accomplish.

Schools that are communities for learning create an environment in which teachers and students best perform their respective jobs—teaching and learning.

Restructured Middle Schools

Effective schools for youngsters between childhood and adolescence are structured differently from the traditional junior high. They are organized around teams of teachers and students, longer blocks of instructional time, and periods for planning and advising. This is accomplished by:

- creating a school-within-a-school for students of one or more grades, with each "house" or mini-school located in the same wing or part of the campus;

- organizing teams of teachers for each mini-school, allowing teachers to share responsibility for the same students for one or more years;
- dividing the school day into longer blocks of instructional time;
- giving teachers on the team a period for planning together or individually, for example, while students are taking physical education or electives;
- assigning to each student an adult advisor who is that student's mentor and creating some time every day for the adult to meet with his or her advisees.

This ideal organization brings a common group of students and teachers together for longer periods. Students in each house—some call it a team or cluster—reflect the mix of ethnicity, socio-economic status, maturity, and intellectual ability of the larger school population. Teachers teach the core academic curriculum to all students. Grouping and re-grouping students, as instructional needs require, rather than separating students by prior achievement level or test scores, provides all students with the opportunity to learn the same content. De-tracking is one of the most difficult and controversial issues restructuring middle schools must face if they are to be successful in teaching a common core curriculum to all students.

Each adult in the school has an advisory period with as small a group of advisees as possible. Even if it is only for 20 or 30 minutes a day, each student knows there is one adult who will listen to problems and discuss a course of action. An advisory program does not replace the school guidance counselor who can give more concentrated attention to individual students, communicate with parents and family members, and provide appropriate services as needed. In school districts too poor to afford guidance counselors at the middle school level, teacher-advisors serve this function.

Teachers no longer work in isolation from one another. Students interact with their instructors in the same space for most of the day.

Altogether, this restructuring creates a more stable and intimate climate for teaching and learning. Teachers no longer work in isolation from one another. Students interact with their instructors in the same space for most of the day.

Encouraging Restructuring

Traditional junior high schools have existed for most of this century largely because of state mandates. Laws and regulations often prescribe the number of minutes for instruction, the pupil-teacher ratio, the number of students per one guidance counselor, and other details of the school calendar. States can support the transformation of junior highs into middle schools in two ways.

- First, rid state laws of rigid administrative regulations, and accreditation guidelines of prescriptions and mandates concerning organization and scheduling.
- Second, promote and disseminate knowledge about restructuring schools in ways that best meet the needs of young adolescents and enhance the professional ability of teachers.

Some state legislatures have repealed provisions of their state education code. In 1995, the Texas Legislature passed legislation making significant reforms of its laws governing schools and the Texas Education Agency. High-performing schools may be exempt from a wide range of statutory and administrative requirements.[1]

Accreditation guidelines should allow for alternative ways of organizing instruction. Schools should not have to seek waivers from state regulations in order to reorganize. Indiana's Performance-Based Accreditation System specifies a minimum number of minutes per week for instruction in each subject and the number of instructional periods per day,[2] but schools have flexibility in how they organize that time and how the staff will be deployed.

Approximately 110 to 150 students can be grouped in a house or school-within-a-school. Each house or team might contain all sixth graders, or the school may decide on multi-age grouping in which students stay in one team throughout the middle grade years. Two to five teachers work as a team in

each house. Two teachers might, for example, jointly teach science and mathematics in a two-period time block to half of the students, while the other half is in language arts, reading, or humanities.

State departments of education can help schools create their own community of learning in a variety of ways. Middle grade educators need examples of how they might restructure the schedule to provide longer instructional periods for some subjects, together with shorter periods for electives, lunch, and student advisories. Sample schedules could be distributed to schools, professional development centers, and at professional meetings. Free software would allow teachers and administrators to experiment with various configurations of a school schedule.

School staff need time to work on a new calendar. State education departments could award mini-grants to pay school personnel for their out-of-school time devoted to working out a new schedule or visiting schools that have restructured their day and week.[7] Making use of time also involves rethinking how school space is utilized. Changing from the traditional junior high school organization based on 50-minute shifts into teams that foster cooperation between students and teachers will require assigning groups to their own wing or floor. The time students previously spent getting from one room to the other can be spent instead on instruction or on short periods for staff conferences or a few minutes with an advisee.

De-regulation is not always the best way to encourage schools to restructure, however. Use of time is an issue requiring state leadership. The Massachusetts Reform Act of 1993 directed the state Board of Education "to evaluate and define the amount of time . . . students spend in the classroom" and "to prepare a plan to extend the time during which students attend school to reflect prevailing norms in advanced industrialized countries." To assist in this charge, the Board created the Massachusetts Commission on Time and Learning. The Commission's recommendations, along with input from the Commissioner of Education and the Board, became the *Student Learning Time Regulations*. State Regulations prevented counting recess, homeroom, and time spent going to and from class as instructional time.

The state implemented new regulations requiring 990 hours of structured learning time for secondary schools and 900 for elementary schools. Middle schools can choose to be one or the other.[8] The Massachusetts Department of Education produced two pamphlets: *Structuring Schools for Student Success: A Focus on Instructional Improvement* (May 1994) and *Structuring Schools for Student Success: A Focus on Ability Grouping* (January 1990). However, just informing schools of the state's policy was not sufficient. The state also sponsored summer institutes on education reform for school teams that were involved in restructuring and awarded small grants to school districts to find ways to make better use of time.

Every state agency and school that has promoted or implemented restructuring knows that changing the structure helps to reduce dropouts and students' alienation from school.

Implementing Massachusetts' time and learning reforms was not without controversy, particularly when it came to negotiating with teachers unions. But the state's new regulations were the impetus for changing schedules and extending learning time. School-to-work experience and summer school counted as instructional time. Recess and study halls did not.

Every state agency and school that has promoted or implemented restructuring knows that changing the structure helps to reduce dropouts and students' alienation from school. While those are worthwhile outcomes, a new structure in the school must be accompanied by a strong curriculum based on state content standards and a substantial infusion of professional development.

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- State Standards Set Expectations For Students And Teacher Professional Development
- Assessments Track Student Learning
- Student Performance Standards Measure Whether Students Are Achieving The Standards

CHAPTER 2

Teaching A Common Core Of Knowledge: What Every Middle School Student Should Know And Be Able To Do

Every middle grade school should provide a core academic program and expect every student to complete it successfully. Each state defines the core differently, but it typically consists of mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies or history. While it is the responsibility of middle grade educators to fashion a curriculum for their school, they should be guided by standards in subject matter adopted by their state. Standards tell students, parents, and teachers what young adolescents are expected to know and be able to do in their academic work. They promote equity by establishing expectations statewide that apply to all middle grade students.

Content standards provide a coherent framework for all facets of middle grade education. They set the context for teacher training and guide the adoption of textbooks and instructional materials. To determine the level of student work that meets the content standards, states establish performance standards or benchmarks. The results of state assessments allow schools to know how successful they are in raising the performance of their students. In addition, a state uses its assessments as a means of identifying exemplary schools, as well as those that are low performing. Exemplary schools are recognized and rewarded. Low-performing schools showing no improvement become the intense focus of state and local concern. State accountability systems are discussed in Section VIII.

States vary in how they treat middle schools. Some standards explicitly define a common core of skills and knowledge that should be mastered by the end of middle school. Other states include middle grades either with elementary or secondary units. No two states have developed standards in precisely the same way and in the same subjects. There are, however, key features that enable middle grade educators to create the kind of curriculum envisioned by *Turning Points*. These attributes are exemplified by a review of 40 content standards in mathematics and science done for the National Science Foundation (NSF) described below.[1]

Content Standards

Standards set high and challenging expectations for student learning. The NSF review found, however, that some science standards called for low-level skills, such as "know types of fossils." In contrast, a more challenging standard asks students to "identify and explain differences in fossils." Standards that simply provide a list of topics to cover lead to a curriculum that consists of memorizing facts and formulae. Such a curriculum lacks depth of understanding and does not challenge students to think about and explain what they know about a topic.

Equity is a major challenge for teaching a common core of knowledge.

The development of critical reasoning skills is essential for middle grade students. As *Turning Points* says, "[C]ontrary to much conventional belief, cognitive development during early adolescence is not on hold." A primary goal of middle grade curriculum and instruction is to discipline young adolescent minds and develop their capacity for active, engaged thinking. Students should be able to assimilate knowledge, not just be able to regurgitate it in class or on exams.

Standards should emphasize depth of understanding over coverage of every conceivable topic.

This allows students to deal with themes, patterns, and ideas within and across subjects. Schools can organize their curriculum around major themes and concentrate their teaching on those themes. Focusing on depth and understanding does not mean that basic skills are ignored. As the NSF review of state content standards in science and mathematics standards found, basic skills and thinking skills can be woven together in instruction.

Standards should specify knowledge and skills in sufficient detail to be useful to a school or district in constructing its own curriculum. Such standards might contain descriptions of practical classroom applications that teachers can use and examples of student work that help demonstrate what is intended to be taught and learned. At the same time, the standards should describe how subjects can be taught in an inter-disciplinary fashion. As an example, a standard in social studies could cross-reference a standard in another subject, like science, showing that both standards deal with common ideas and themes. Students could then be involved in a curriculum unit comparing the organization and interrelatedness of the physical world and nature with how systems of government are organized. Thirty-eight states have adopted academic standards in all four core subjects, according to *Quality Counts '98*.

Equity is a major challenge for teaching a common core of knowledge. Differentiating curriculum for high-achieving, college-bound students from that of low-achieving, presumptively non-college bound students often begins at the middle grade level. Racial and ethnic minorities, limited-English speaking and low-income students, and disabled children have had less participation and success in high level and challenging curriculum. Girls may not be encouraged to take high-level math and science. The reformation of middle grade schools is based on the proposition that all middle grade students can learn the expected knowledge and skills.

The NSF analysis of math and science standards found the goal of equity articulated in the vision or rationale section of state standards, but it was not integrated throughout the standards or addressed in the instructional strategies. Equity in the common core means more than portraying African American and female scientists, authors, or historic figures. Curriculum frameworks, which elucidate the standards, need to show how teachers can design a curriculum and deliver instruction that enables all young adolescents, regardless of their prior achievement, to move through academically challenging content. Some states offer guidance to teachers about various strategies that enable students to understand at a concrete level the meaning of a scientific concept. For example, the principles of force and motion can be demonstrated by the use of front and rear brakes on a bicycle.

Young adolescents need to see the relevance of academic skills and knowledge for their own futures. The Higher Education Awareness Program in South Carolina gets eighth graders thinking about what it takes to prepare for college. South Carolina's School-To-Work law requires individual plans beginning with sixth graders to illustrate the connection between what is learned in school and possible career options.

Beyond The Core: Health Education and Service Learning

Turning Points' recommendations for teaching a common core of knowledge extend

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS

Health Education
Grades 6–8

Health Literacy

- Standard 1: The student comprehends concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
- Standard 2: The student knows how to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.

Responsible Health Behavior

- Standard 1: The student knows health-enhancing behaviors and how to reduce health risks.
- Standard 2: The student analyzes the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.
- Standard 3: The student knows how to use effective interpersonal communication skills that enhance health.

Advocate and Promote Healthy Living

- Standard 1: The student knows how to use goal-setting and decision-making skills that enhance health.
- Standard 2: The student knows how to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Source: Florida Department of Education, undated

beyond the traditional academic subjects. The integration of health education and service learning teaches young adolescents valuable skills and a sense of social responsibility at a time in their lives when these life skills are most essential to their personal development.

Health Education

Health education, or health literacy, may be treated as an extraneous part of the middle grade curriculum, if it is offered at all. Financially hard pressed schools sometimes can hardly afford to pay for school nurses, much less health education teachers. Nevertheless, some states, such as Rhode Island and Massachusetts, rank health education as a priority and pay for it with a state tax on tobacco and alcohol.

States vary in their requirements for health education. Florida, Texas, and Rhode Island require that health instruction be taught in middle grades. Florida's Sunshine State Standards for grades 6-8 specify seven standards for health literacy.

Both Florida and Rhode Island have adopted content standards for health education. Florida's seven Sunshine State Standards for health literacy in grades 6-8 are shown in the box on this page.[2] Each of Rhode Island's seven content standards for health education is accompanied by a list of performance descriptions for what the state wants all students to know and be able to do in elementary, middle, and high school grades.[3] Health education is taught by certified teachers as its own subject. All eighth graders in the state complete performance assessments in health, along with mathematics. Shown on the next page are Rhode Island's seven standards and the performance descriptions for the second standard.

Maryland, by contrast, provides a curriculum framework, and health education is developed locally by integrating it into other parts of the curriculum. School districts need only certify to the state that the topic is covered.

The Illinois State Board of Education has trained teams of teachers in the use of the Stanford University Human Biology (HUMBIO) for the middle grades.[4] The HUMBIO curriculum materials are specifically designed to support the integration of science and health into the curriculum, as recommended by *Turning Points*. The emphasis on decision-making skills about issues that are relevant and interesting to young adolescents enables teachers to present students with a higher level of intellectual challenge than is typically the case in many middle

RHODE ISLAND'S HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS

- **Standard One:** Students will understand the concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention as a foundation for a healthy life.
- **Standard Two:** Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.
- **Standard Three:** Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.
- **Standard Four:** Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.
- **Standard Five:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.
- **Standard Six:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision-making to enhance health.
- **Standard Seven:** Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, community, and environmental health.

Performance Descriptions

Standard Two, Grades 5-8

- 1. Analyze the validity of health information, products, and services.
- 2. Utilize resources from home, school, and community that provide valid health information.
- 3. Analyze how media influences the selection of health information, products, and services.
- 4. Locate health products and services.
- 5. Compare the costs and validity of health products.
- 6. Describe situations requiring professional health services.
- 7. Explain roles played by different health providers.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (undated) Health Literacy for All Students — The Rhode Island Health Education Framework, pp.14-15 (Author).

schools. The curriculum's modular units offer students opportunities to perform experiments, work on group projects, and debate specific topics.

Service Learning*

Turning Points further recommends that young adolescents have opportunities to perform community service organized through their school. Maryland is the only state that requires community service for high school graduation. Students can begin completing the 120 required hours of service while they are in middle school. This activity teaches citizenship, working with others, and carrying jobs to completion. Service learning provides a way to integrate into the curriculum issues in students' immediate lives. Indiana's Accreditation Guidelines describe community service* in the middle grade curriculum [5] as activities in which students:

- apply curriculum-based knowledge in experiential settings through the fulfillment of an unmet community need; and
- reflect on and understand the impact and importance of their efforts as well as the educational benefit to themselves.

As this description exemplifies, service learning becomes part of the core curriculum. State policies usually encourage service learning on a voluntary basis. However, state encouragement may not be enough without some financial incentives for schools. Small grants to pay for adult supervision and coordination of a school's service learning program are the incentive most schools are likely to need to establish a service learning component.

Service learning provides a way to integrate into the curriculum issues in students' immediate lives.

The Kentucky Department of Education provides grants to school districts for integrating service projects and academic learning. Floyd County used its grant for middle school students who complete 15 hours of service learning to "graduate" from eighth grade. They have undertaken various projects, including building trails and an amphitheater or an outdoor classroom, assisting in the work of the Family Resource Center, and hosting an environmental fair.[6]

Opportunities for service learning abound in the adolescent years. These opportunities can be part of a larger effort to engage community groups and institutions in the life of the school, as discussed in Section VII. Students can be cross-age tutors, library assistants, safety officers, and student governance or court officers. Beyond school boundaries, students can assist with child care in latch-key programs, carry groceries for the elderly or disabled, and clean up the neighborhood. A seventh grade art class, for example, may paint a wall mural downtown as its project for the year. A recycling project as part of a study of the environment for a science class is a popular service learning activity.

Assessments

State assessments play an important role in creating high performance middle schools. In a standards-based education system, state assessments measure student achievement relative to the state's content standards. Assessments focus the attention and effort of students and teachers on the knowledge and skills that must be mastered to "meet the standards."

The type of test a state chooses must closely reflect the objectives of high performance middle schools—that young adolescents learn how to apply basic skills to solve complex, "real world" problems. For that reason, many states are moving away from total reliance on multiple-choice tests. Writing tests and short, written answers in reading and language arts are increasingly common. Mathematics items require students to explain how they solved a problem, while at the same time demonstrating that they can calculate accurately.

State assessments also promote the goal of equity by providing targets for the achievement of all students, regardless of their school or district, or of their economic circumstance, racial or ethnic

background, disability, gender, and language proficiency.

The end of middle school, at the eighth or ninth grade, is a common marker for statewide assessments. Thirty-nine states administered an eighth grade assessment in the 1995-96 school year. In that same year, assessments were used for school accountability in 38 states and for student accountability in 23 states.[7]

School Accountability—The results of eighth or ninth grade assessments identify schools that are not succeeding in raising student achievement. (The Texas and Maryland accountability systems are discussed on pages 70-82.) The consequences that flow from identifying such schools are first and foremost to provide intensive and sustained assistance. Test scores are a point of departure for inquiring into the reasons for low performance. For example, did students have an opportunity to learn the material contained in the content standards? Is the school organized to create a climate for learning? Have teachers had the opportunity to acquire knowledge of the content and of different instructional strategies?

Assessment results can be used as a kind of early warning system, putting local administrators on notice that they should attend to their low-performing schools so that state intervention is not needed. Other states may decide to intervene more directly by appointing a technical assistance team or a monitor to work with the low-performing school over a prescribed period of time. The Texas accountability system, discussed in Chapter VIII, calls for direct state intervention with chronically failing schools.

Annual assessments will enable state, district and school officials to monitor a school's progress. Each year, the assessment will answer questions such as, "Are more eighth graders demonstrating proficiency in mathematics and reading than last year?"

Student Accountability—Some states—including Maryland, Ohio, and Texas—require students to pass an examination in order to receive a high school diploma. Maryland and Ohio allow students to take the examination in the middle grades. Texas students must pass a tenth grade test.

Legislators and other state policymakers often view student performance on a state assessment as an antidote to social promotion or as a way to restore value to the high school diploma. Testing experts, however, caution against attaching high-stakes consequences to a middle grade assessment. A technically reliable and valid assessment of high quality takes time to develop. Especially important is a close alignment between test items and the knowledge and skills contained in the content standards. Assessments must undergo rigorous evaluation and pilot-testing before they are used to retain students or deny them a diploma. Furthermore, students and teachers need time to understand what the assessments expect of them and to adjust their habits of learning and teaching accordingly.[8]

Equity is a major challenge for teaching a common core of knowledge.

Public Reporting—Publication of achievement scores serves important public policy interests, as discussed further on pages 57-69. Disclosure engenders support from parents and taxpayers for public schools by demonstrating that the education system intends to be accountable and successful. The proportion of taxpayers who have children in public schools is declining in many school districts. Publicizing achievement results is one indication of the kind of schools for which their tax dollars are paying. Communities develop pride in one of their central institutions when achievement improves year after year, much as happens in sports when schools are successful in inter-scholastic events. Where parents can choose their children's schools, test results provide information with which to make an informed choice.

- Middle grade educators are re-defining professional development.
- Restructured middle schools eliminate tracking so that all students have access to the same curriculum.

CHAPTER 3

Ensuring Success For All Students: Teaching And Professional Development

Historically, local school districts, rather than states, have had primary responsibility for the content and funding of professional development for incumbent teachers.

Middle schools that are undertaking fundamental change in the way young adolescents are educated are leading state and local policymakers to recognize that the present system of professional development is ineffective and incompatible with the goals of the state's school improvement efforts. The middle grade reform movement itself has spawned new forms of professional development through the creation of networks of like-minded schools, school coaches, teacher mentors, and common planning time.

There also seems to be wide agreement that developing new standards and assessments will not, by itself, increase student learning unless those who deliver the instruction are retrained. Despite the daunting task of changing how this large workforce is prepared to teach more challenging content, professional development at all grade levels has become a leading subject of interest among education reformers.[1]

One overriding reason for this heightened interest is the recognition that public education must be successful with many more students than is presently the case. Large numbers of young people simply disengage from school, beginning in the middle grades, and never finish high school or obtain an equivalent diploma. Teachers and administrators must learn diverse ways of motivating students and stimulating their interest, of working with their parents and other significant adults in the community, and of changing the school culture and teachers' practice in order to ensure success for all students.

What Is Wrong With Current Practice?

Prevailing practices of training teachers are remarkably similar to the way in which students are taught, instruction which reformers are also trying to change. Teachers are expected to absorb knowledge dispensed by district administrators, professional trainers or consultants and delivered to mass audiences. Topics are usually selected by administrators, with teacher involvement often limited to completing surveys about their choices. There is little or no opportunity for follow-up discussion or observation concerning how new ideas can be incorporated into their practice.

Other investments in professional development consist of policies that pay individual teachers for taking college courses, the subject of which may have little bearing on the goals or needs of the school. The assumption is that this individual training will redound to students' benefit, when too often the objective is to acquire certification that enables teachers to leave the classroom for a higher paying job.

The middle grade reform movement itself has spawned new forms of professional development

Professional development has acquired a bad name in the profession and with parents. Much of it is unrelated to daily problems in the classroom, and teachers are often expected to do it on uncompensated time. Parents object when they have to find child care because teachers are taking

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half a day for professional development. School boards tend to treat professional development as a luxury that can be dispensed with in times of fiscal constraint. The public, in general, places higher priorities on school safety, proper discipline, and teaching the basics.

State officials have responsibility for leadership in changing the attitude of taxpayers, teachers, and parents about the importance of investing in professional development. Business and corporate executives should disclose the amount their companies invest annually in employee training in order to raise productivity and to remain competitive.

Innovations In Professional Development

New approaches to professional development are bringing about changes for middle grade educators. Underlying these changes is a fundamental redefinition of what constitutes in-service training. Teachers themselves must have the responsibility for determining what training they need, rather than the central office unilaterally deciding the substance and controlling the resources. Professional development must be sustained, continuous, and carried out in a variety of settings. It should not be limited to a lecture in the school auditorium or central office conference room. Teachers can learn from other practitioners in networks of educators who are trying out different instructional practices. Schools that are innovative need support and reinforcement from other schools that have blazed the trail ahead of them.

State officials have responsibility for leadership in changing the attitude of taxpayers, teachers, and parents about the importance of investing in professional development.

Time and incentives for professional activities can be changed. Most school systems have days set aside in the calendar that are officially recognized for professional development, as if those were the only days teachers hone their pedagogical skills. A more realistic definition includes: regional and state-wide meetings or networks of middle school educators, common planning time built into the school schedule, meetings of school improvement teams, visits to other schools, work with coaches and mentor teachers, and analysis of student achievement data.

The state's role is to foster and support new forms of professional development and encourage innovation wherever possible. Money spent on ineffective professional in-service training can be redirected, including moving resources out of the state agency and into schools and regional centers. New sources of capacity building can be designed to accommodate a state's unique needs and traditions.

Professional Development In Schools

Unlike most in-service training provided on college campuses, the University of North Dakota (UND) provides professional development right in middle schools that are implementing *Turning Points* reforms. "University Friends"—university-based staff from all of North Dakota's state colleges, who provide professional development in middle schools—use UND's syllabus, adopted to local circumstances when they work in schools. They may use as a co-instructor one of the school's teachers or a health-provider from the county school district and/or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the adolescent development course. Teachers who complete ten semester hours of graduate credit course work in adolescent development, middle level philosophy, curriculum and instructional strategies, and reading in the content area are eligible to obtain a North Dakota endorsement.

Schools are the hub for professional development. In addition to the graduate-level courses, the schools with the most experience (known as Lead Schools) in middle grade reform provide professional activities for their own faculty and for other middle schools in their region. These activities consist of workshops for continuing education credit and study groups that address specific issues in adolescent education, such as advisories. Lead Schools encourage teams from

other schools in North Dakota and Minnesota to visit for observation and discussion of middle level practices.

This locally-controlled, on-site professional development suits a large, diverse, and sparsely-settled state. The state supports these professional development initiatives in the belief that locally-owned reforms will be more durable and appropriate for its scattered population than "top-down" reforms would be. The Bridges Project, sponsored by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the University of North Dakota and the Carnegie Corporation, reimburses the Lead Schools for the expenses incurred for professional development activities, sponsors state conferences of middle level education, supports a principals' network and provides print and video resources and speakers for schools involved in education improvement efforts.

Teachers and principals find that professional development is the critical ingredient for transforming middle level education and for giving it staying power. More and more teachers have found that their professional activities are integral to working with young adolescents and parents. Since it first began with six schools in 1993, North Dakota has grown to 24 schools engaged in middle school reform. These 24 schools enroll 85 percent of all middle grade students in the state.

Middle School Networks

Statewide networks connect middle schools with each other and share professional expertise that had formerly been isolated in individual classrooms and schools. School networks in California, Rhode Island, Texas, and Illinois have demonstrated that, with fairly limited resources, educators can help each other grow and change. The Rhode Island Department of Education wanted to create an organizational structure that would be practitioner-driven, that would build capacity over time, and that would become institutionalized outside of the state agency. That organization became the Rhode Island Middle Level Educators (RIMLE). Although the initiative started with state officials, RIMLE soon operated under its own board and conducted its own activities. It was RIMLE that produced the first policy document in 1992, entitled *From the Margins To The Middle*, that informed the state board of education about the need to transform schooling for early adolescents. Although RIMLE sponsors annual conferences, it is seeking ways to provide more sustained professional activities beyond "one shot" conferences.

Teachers and principals find that professional development is the critical ingredient for transforming middle level education and for giving it staying power.

The partnership between the Illinois State Board of Education and the AIMS Middle Grades Network has been successful in raising interest about middle school reform throughout the state. However, it is not dependent on the state; it is self-sustaining and self-managed. Through their own experience, members find that they learn more and are far more helpful to each other than if they depend on outside expertise and hired consultants. In order to withstand shifting state policy priorities and the withdrawal of foundation resources, this professional development collaborative must be able to continue on its own.

Some 500 California middle schools belong to networks stretching from Oregon to the Mexico border. Their goal is to become state-of-the-art middle schools patterned on *Turning Points* principles. Through these networks, teachers and principals share information and experience about scheduling, teaming, thematic curriculum, and advisory periods. They furnish training in cooperative learning and strategies for teaching heterogeneous classes. The middle grades office of the California Department of Education provides leadership and support to the networks.

Acting on the recommendations of the California Middle Grades Task Force Report, *Caught In The Middle*, in 1988 the State Department of Education invited its middle grade

THE TEXAS MENTOR SCHOOL NETWORK

The Texas Middle School Mentor Network is a mechanism to build capacity for school reform. As a part of the larger Texas Mentor School Network (TMSN), 65 middle schools from across the state have been selected as "mentors" based on years of successful implementation of research-based best practices, specifically those found in *Turning Points*. The Texas Middle School Mentor Network structure has been replicated at the High School and Early Childhood/ Elementary school levels. The Texas Mentor School Network consists of 170 designated mentor campuses, PK-12, which provide technical assistance and support the approximately 6,400 campuses in Texas.

In addition to successfully implementing best practices, the mentor campuses must show consistent gains in student achievement as evidenced on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests, be willing to share their successes (and failures) with others, and have the capacity to "mentor" others through the change process. Each designated mentor campus receives a performance grant of $8,000. These funds are used for on-going professional development of the mentor school staff and defray the costs of mentoring others. The decision on how funds are spent is made collaboratively with other mentor campuses in the school's Education Service Center (ESC) area and Service Center staff who help coordinate the efforts of their regional schools.

The legislative appropriation flows to the Region XIII Education Service Center located in Austin which, in turn, distributes the funds to the other 19 ESC's or the district in which a mentor campus is located. The mentor campus signs a performance contract which details the responsibilities of being a mentor school and receives pertinent information regarding the procedures for the disbursement and accounting of allocated monies.

Teachers and administrators from the mentor schools provide technical assistance and support to campuses requesting help. Topics may include academic teaming, scheduling, analysis of state assessment data, new instructional strategies, curriculum, parent and community involvement, or others. Mentor campuses are asked, when possible, to work with high schools and elementary schools to increase the vertical articulation of promising practices and staff development. For example, the 25 mentor campuses (elementary, middle and high) in the Houston area collaborate to provide national speakers for schools in the Region IV Education Service Center area on an annual basis.

The Texas Mentor School Network is available to support all schools in Texas which need or want its support. Schools designated as low performing by the Texas accountability system can turn to the TMSN for assistance. Schools involved with the network receive the latest information about what is successful in education and the support to implement changes where necessary. The Texas Mentor School Network has been successful in the development of supportive and academically challenging educational environments for the young adolescents of Texas.

The Texas Mentor School Network is unusual because it is directly funded by the legislature, giving schools a vested interest in that line item in the state's budget. In contrast to a direct legislative appropriation, states can stimulate the creation of networks through an initial grant to a non-governmental organization. Thereafter, the state can adopt a policy that network membership fees and other costs for participation in network activities are an allowable expenditure under Title I, Title II (the Eisenhower Professional Development Program), or state-funded professional development.

The Illinois Middle Grades Network began with a federal grant to the Association of Illinois Middle Level Schools (AIMS), an organization created by teachers and principals who wanted to prompt more attention to the specific needs of middle school educators. The Network, which began in 1989 with 12 schools, had grown to 97 schools by 1997.(2) The AIMS Network subsequently involved the schools in the Illinois State Board of Education's Middle Grades School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI).

schools to become state-of-the-art middle schools. Even though the state offered no money, 400 schools responded. The state chose 105 schools in 10 networks. Two years after that first initiative, the middle grades office issued a request for proposals, offering Carnegie Corporation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation funding of $35,000 per network. Ten networks were funded, each one of which had 10 schools. A second request for proposals brought in 126 more schools, for a total of 226 schools in 21 networks.

After their initial start with state leadership, foundation funding, and their own money, the networks have developed into a truly grassroots movement. Each network is self-sufficient. Principals manage the networks. They decide who will serve as the fiscal agent for the network and how much each school will contribute in order to carry out commonly-agreed activities. The state middle grades office recommends a membership fee of $1,500 for a school with 500 or fewer students and $3,000 for a school whose enrollment exceeds 500 students. Even the highest poverty school can use Title I or state school improvement funds to pay for its annual membership in the network.

The California Department of Education divides $58,000 in Title VI (Improving America's Schools Act) funds among the networks as its own membership fee. Although it is a small amount, the state's contribution sends a clear message to the schools that the state is a partner, rather than a dictator, in their reform efforts. The state encourages the fiscal agent, either a county office of education or a school district, to donate its services as an in-kind contribution to the network. Schools negotiate with their districts for common staff development days so that all staff at each school can attend their network's symposiums.

Through experience, middle grade reformers in California have found that 10 schools in a network form a critical mass. The partnership means that each school should benefit from the network's activity. When there are more than 13 schools, it is too easy for one school to become invisible. But fewer than 10 schools in a network places too much responsibility on the principals who run it.

To ensure that schools have ownership of their network, the state actively discourages the formation of a network that serves a single district. The Anaheim Union High School District, for example, has eight middle schools that belong to three different networks.

Each network generally meets once a month, rotating its meeting place among its member schools. The older schools mentor newer schools. Principals find that participation in their middle grade network is a true professional experience that allows them to talk with each other and problem solve together.

School Coaches

Massachusetts has been involved for seven years in helping schools go through a process of school change that leads to improved instruction. The state has a number of reform networks—The Coalition of Essential Schools, the Accelerated Schools Network and Project Zero—in addition to the Carnegie Corporation's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative. The Department of Education encouraged as many networks of like-minded reform philosophies as possible in order to break teachers out of their isolation and to provide many possibilities for professional development.

Experience quickly made apparent that most schools could not undertake fundamental

NETWORKING IN ILLINOIS

Two kinds of schools belong to the Illinois Middle Grades Network. Demonstration schools are restructured middle schools that are admitted because of their practices and commitment to provide technical assistance. Schools that have not begun restructuring but have the potential and commitment to do so are admitted as partnership schools. Each partnership school pays $2,000 to join the network, plus a small annual fee that signifies its commitment to work with a demonstration school on changing its structure and practices.

The network is the umbrella for many relationships—teachers helping teachers; principals collaborating with each other; and school-to-school partnerships. Individuals take responsibility for keeping people connected to the network. The network has maintained data across all its schools for six years through the use of the High Performance Learning Communities Assessment. (See pages 37-43.) This makes it possible to document the impact changed practices have had on students, teachers and school outcomes.

change by themselves. Professional development networks were helpful but not sufficient. Schools needed someone to help guide them through the change process, to be a facilitator, to be an "outside eye." Thus evolved the idea of coaches.[3]

For the first few years, the coaches were employees of the Massachusetts Department of Education. But as the number of schools grew, it became apparent that the need had outstripped the Department's capacity. The coaches themselves needed training, so the Department shifted its focus to providing the training and support of people the schools or the district identified as their coaches. Most educators are not trained in how to facilitate the process of change or to build a culture of dialogue and discourse or to create a professional community. Neither are they trained to analyze data and use it as a deliberate part of school improvement planning.

Another beneficial, but unintended, outgrowth of Massachusetts' use of school coaches is that central office people begin to see themselves in a new light. No longer are they managing programs, doling out money, and carving up their own turf. Their job is to create and sustain a culture of improved student learning in schools. A coach from the central office is able to raise at the district level any practices that are interfering with the school's attempt to change.

OUTSIDE EYE: COACHES

Massachusetts has 26 coaches in its middle grade reform network. Some coaches serve as the outside eye of more than one school. Changing how a school operates is not accomplished by the checklist approach. It requires making sure that every teacher and every student is focused on the goals of that school. The coach is supposed to make sure that the change process happens. They move the school community along by dealing with factions among the faculty, acclimating new teachers to the school, and serving as a liaison between the school and the central office.

Coaches located in the district work better than state coaches. They have a greater presence and enjoy the confidence of people in the building. They are able to deal with issues as they arise, instead of getting into a situation where everything falls apart and the coach has to come in and pick up the pieces. Some coaches are in-house coaches—assistant principals, or even teachers—within their own building. That arrangement usually does not work well. It confuses the role of facilitator with that of supervisor or fellow faculty member. Someone who is close by but not an insider has the perspective of a sympathetic outsider.

The state department of education continues to support the change process. It brings coaches, principals, and teams of teachers together at statewide network meetings. It also produced a coaches handbook.

Heterogeneous Classes

Nowhere is the state's role more critical than in assuring equal access to a strong core curriculum. As a matter of both legal obligation and educational policy, states must assure that schools provide instruction in the skills and knowledge contained in state content standards and curriculum frameworks to all students and that teachers are fully competent to deliver that instruction.

When a school community decides to engage in middle school change and restructuring, one of its greatest challenges will be to "detrack" classrooms to ensure success for all students. Many teachers may have a commitment to providing all their students the opportunity to acquire the same knowledge and skills, but they are unprepared to teach varying levels of ability in their classrooms.

Resistance to heterogeneous classes is likely to come from some in the school community. More affluent parents may fear that their college-bound children will be held back by the presence of slow learners in the same class. Teachers and parents who are advocates of gifted and talented education programs are likely to argue for preserving these special classes. It is essential to convince those advocates that middle school reform will not dilute the instruction and expectations for their children. Involving professional and parent members of the gifted and talented community in middle school reform is an advantageous way to capture their support for reforming the middle school so that it has high expectations and a challenging curriculum for all students, not just a few.

Texas middle school reformers find that structural changes, such as organizing teams of students and teachers within the school, are, by themselves, not the complete answer to raising the achievement levels of all students. A core

curriculum must be institutionalized in the school.[4] Continuous opportunities for professional development, such as those provided through the Texas Mentor School Network, help to ensure that teachers have the skills to impart the core curriculum to different learners. The state's accountability system is also a powerful tool for convincing people that virtually all students can achieve at higher levels. Accountability says that the state cares about the achievement of all students. (See pages 70-82.) As one middle school educator with a professional background in gifted and talented education says, "If you tell people you expect gains, you get them."

The state can further middle school reform by publicizing information about heterogeneous classes and high student achievement in very diverse schools. Massachusetts' Department of Education produced a brochure about the research evidence on ability grouping, showing the educational harm to students tracked in low-level classes. The University of Texas' Dana Research Center found 50 elementary and middle schools where at least 60 percent of the students received free or reduced price meals that enabled 70 percent of the students to pass the reading and math sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills.[5] Researchers identified the key practices that enabled these schools to achieve high levels of academic success and brought them to the attention of teachers, principals, parents, and educational leaders through publications and a 30-minute video.

Transforming schooling for young adolescents requires more than re-grouping students and teachers and changing the school schedule. It means changing people's beliefs about education. Attitudes can be influenced by helping middle school educators change their instructional practices through new professional experiences. Teachers will find their rewards when more and more students are succeeding academically and when they have more control over learning their craft.

Still another strategy for ensuring equal access to the core curriculum is to conduct research into the so-called "enacted curriculum." That term refers to what is actually taught in the classroom, as distinguished from what is "intended" to be taught, as spelled out in state content standards or curriculum frameworks. Teacher questionnaires and time logs can be used to record the topic of instruction and the kind of instruction (e.g. lectures, student demonstrations) over a semester. Middle grade students can also complete questionnaires about the kind of work they do in class (e.g. "Would you say that you fill in blanks on worksheets all the time, some of the time, or never?"). Information from these sources tells something about students' access to various learning opportunities.[6]

Teachers will find their rewards when more and more students are succeeding academically and when they have more control over learning their craft.

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- Leadership training for principals supports middle grade reform.
- The ability to collect and analyze information about the process of restructuring is a critical management tool for teachers and administrators.

CHAPTER 4

Principals and teachers will not be able to carry out restructuring of middle schools unless they have the authority, skills, and necessary information to do so. Those closest to students and parents who will ultimately be held responsible for student achievement should have direct control and decision-making authority over how the school operates.

At least that is the theory. Some states have promoted policies designed to empower middle school staff to engage in reform. Legislatures, for example, mandate school site councils or other forms of shared decision-making. The state can encourage decentralized authority by giving schools power over their own budgets, as South Carolina is doing. (See pages 58-69.) States can also help districts reshape their central administration so that it provides support and technical assistance for school change. Otherwise, attempts to give school staff more control over how their school functions can be strangled by central office administrators who do not want to give up any of their authority. As Massachusetts found, district administrators can assume new roles as school coaches. Other factors—union contracts, district-wide mandates, central purchasing units—constrain the ability of schools to hire and dismiss employees, to control their purchases, and to decide on the school calendar and daily schedule.

While states usually have little direct influence over district policies that hinder empowerment at the school site, they can pursue policies that enable district and school staff to change middle grade schools. Leadership training for district administrators and principals is critical to initiating and sustaining reform. School networks train teachers to work in teams and participate in collaborative decision-making, as discussed in the previous section on professional development. Prospective teachers in training, addressed in the following section, should also get experience during their college careers in group process skills, such as formulating agendas, conducting efficient meetings, and collecting and presenting information to a committee or council.

Shifting authority from the central office to the building level requires that people on the front line, in schools, have the tools to exercise authority over their own operations. Providing training and disseminating information to schools are ways that states' leadership can empower teachers and administrators.

Principal Leadership

Without doubt, the single most influential person in a school building is the principal. The tone he or she sets in interactions with teachers and other staff and in dealings with parents and community leaders has a direct bearing on how a school exercises the power and authority it has acquired from district officials or state law. A principal must know not only how to exercise authority, but also how to share power with the staff. The principal who delegates roles, such as conducting staff meetings, signifies a willingness to empower others. The principal must also be an instructional leader.

Staffing and budget decisions made by the central office have a powerful influence on a school's capacity to transform itself. One of the most significant barriers to middle grade reform is the frequent turnover of principals. Reassigning the principal of a middle school in transition interferes with the planning and momentum it has developed.

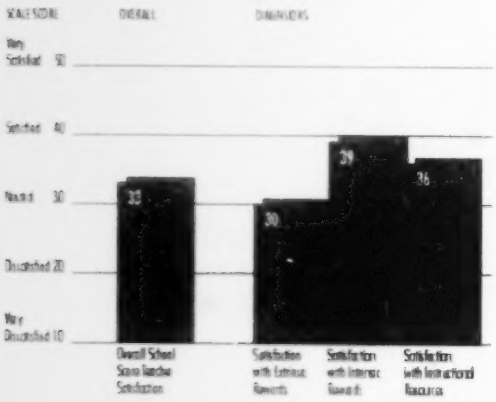
Principals are not interchangeable. Special

training and experience in working with pre-teens is as important to middle schools as training and experience with young children or older adolescents are to elementary or high schools. Leadership academies can be established during the summer at several locations throughout a state to provide training for principals in the elements of middle grade reform and restructuring. These academies could customize training for persons with administrative credentials who wish to begin their careers in the middle grades, as well as for those principals or assistant principals who are being reassigned to middle schools.

ANYSCHOOL

Teacher Satisfaction Ratings–Total School

Summary Score and by Dimension of Teacher Satisfaction
Question: Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following aspects of your job.



This unpublished chart is reproduced with the permission of Dr. Robert Felner, Director, National Center on Public Education and Social Policy and Chair, Department of Education, University of Rhode Island.

The purpose of leadership training is to create a cadre of middle grade principals who are fully equipped to function in a restructuring middle school. Principals should also learn how to share leadership functions and decision making with teachers, other staff and parents. School administrators who have only worked in a very hierarchical environment are more likely to carry over those habits in a new assignment unless they have been provided with different administrative skills. State networks, such as those in Illinois and California, provide mentoring opportunities for principals who have just been assigned to a middle school that is restructuring.

The Power of Information

A school's authority to make decisions depends on having information, or knowing where to find it, and learning how to analyze it. Such skills are not typically taught in colleges of education. Schools operate on guesswork unless the staff and parents know what current conditions are and can assess the impact of changes on school climate, achievement, and student behavior. Teachers and principals have learned to fear data. Test scores published in the local newspaper can be embarrassing. They are often used to criticize schools despite their genuine efforts to improve student achievement.

Acquiring the ability to use information can be one of the most important tools for reforming a middle school. Collecting and interpreting data informs thoughtful discussion and decision-making. Teachers and parents need regular information in order to set goals, to monitor progress, and to change course. States can provide valuable assistance by helping schools to make better use of the data they already have and to encourage the collection of information they need but do not have.

Schools usually have a wealth of information from the tests students take. State testing departments and commercial test publishers generate test data in several different numerical values—scale scores, percentiles, normal curve equivalents, and stanines—and in many formats—individual student reports, classroom skill diagnostics, and grade and school averages. But what does any of it mean?

States need to improve the way they provide feedback to schools. In addition to the raw data, schools need disaggregated and historical, or longitudinal, data. The distribution of scores, for example by quartile or performance benchmark, shows how many students are below and above the grade or the norm. Results can be disaggregated by subpopulation of students (race/ethnic group, gender, English proficiency, socio-economic status, and special needs students) so that faculty and parents can identify which students are succeeding and which require special attention. Test results should also be disaggregated for the length of time students have attended the same school. Combining the scores of students who have been present since the first official enrollment count and those who arrived mid-way in the year is not a fair or accurate way to measure a school's efforts to improve achievement.

Disaggregated and longitudinal information

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can be useful both to identify weaknesses and to show progress. Data for two prior years, in addition to the current test administration, portray reading and mathematics achievement for the same cohort of students as they progressed from the sixth to eighth grade. Historical data for each grade show, for example, how each seventh grade scored in reading over a three year period.

As important as achievement information is, schools need to know about underlying conditions that contribute to or interfere with implementing change. For that, a self-study is helpful.

A Self Study

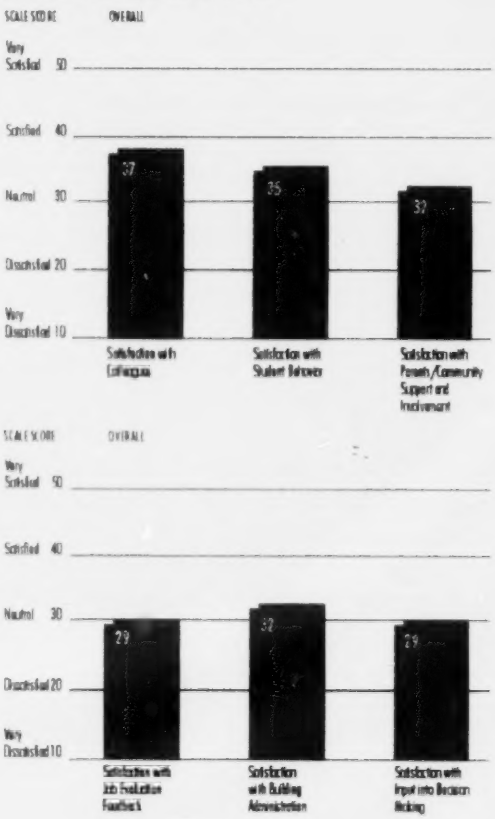
A self-study is a tool to help a school's staff obtain baseline data, gauge the extent to which its improvement efforts are on course, and determine whether changes are having an effect on its students. Knowledge gained from a self-study can aid in short-term and long-term planning by raising key questions that will need to be addressed. Schools need an objective mechanism for obtaining information essential to planning, such as one that yields comprehensive data within the limited amount of time schools have for collecting information.

A self-study is like a mirror. A school is able to see a reflection of itself through answers on questionnaires completed by classroom teachers, students, and administrators. Schools participating in the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI) have found the self-study developed by Dr. Robert Felner to be especially useful. Dr. Felner is the director of the National Center on Public Education and Social Policy and chair of the Department of Education at the University of Rhode Island. The *High Performance Learning Communities Assessment (HiPLaCes-A) Self Study* is based on more than ten years of reliability and validity testing and development. Questions are in multiple choice format. Answers are marked on a scannable bubble sheet so that they can be machine-scored. Schools can have their results in as little as six weeks.

Rather than depending on suppositions, schools have annual information on where they are in the change process in relation to where they want to go. Feedback from the *HiPLaCes-A Self Study* provides schools with an assessment of the current levels of attainment of each of the *Turning Points* implementation categories, such as structural changes, family and community involvement, staff development, and decision-making practices. Teachers also get answers about classroom climate, job stress and burn-out, job satisfaction, and commitment to the school and middle grade practices. Schools are also provided with information about students' perceptions of school climate, expectations of school instruction, and socio-emotional strengths and stresses such as self-esteem, anxiety, health behaviors and attitudes, and health and nutritional knowledge.

Finally, the self-study documents the impact of reforms a school has undertaken. Should the school board or superintendent wish to make changes in school schedules or organization, schools have evidence that what they are doing is improving learning, attendance, and student behavior.

The chart which follows is an example of information generated by a HiPLaCes-A Self Study. This particular chart is used by Dr. Felner for training purposes and is based on hypothetical data.



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- States have a timely opportunity to remedy the current shortage of teachers prepared to work in transformed middle schools.
- Certification for middle grade teachers, standards for teachers, and accreditation of teacher training institutions must be aligned with what young adolescents should know and be able to do.

CHAPTER 5

Pre-Service Preparation For Teachers In Middle Schools

It would be unthinkable to assign to kindergarten or high schools teachers who are not trained and certified to teach children at those ages. Yet, that is common practice for middle schools. The majority of those teaching young adolescents are not prepared to deal with their physical, emotional, and intellectual development. Nor are they trained to work as members of interdisciplinary teams and as student advisors. Ill-prepared teachers get their training on the job. This lack of preparation makes middle school restructuring all the more difficult when teachers are trying to cope with the special needs of this age group.

A large number of projected teacher retirements, together with enrollment increases due to a baby-boom echo and immigration, forecast an increase in demand for new teachers. These demographic trends offer states a unique opportunity. If major changes are made now in pre-service training, states can make major advances in changing education for early adolescents.

Teacher preparation institutions have little incentive to offer programs specifically for this grade span if a state does not require a license. The lack of middle grades training in turn deters school boards from reconfiguring grade spans due to the paucity of prepared teachers. Colleges and universities are unlikely to offer middle level preparation if schools and districts do not demand it. They may offer a few courses with the title "middle level education" which provide a superficial background useful only for those who are actually preparing to teach at other grade levels.

States have a preeminent role in the training and credentialing of teachers. School systems recruit and assign teachers, but they depend on the state to supply them. State colleges are usually the biggest trainers of teachers, and state licensing bodies certify those qualified to teach.

Middle Grade License

The lack of a supply of professionally prepared middle grade teachers is a major deterrent to providing a quality education for young adolescents and to the restructuring of traditional junior high schools, as recommended by *Turning Points*. The key to reversing this situation is for state boards of education and other licensure agencies to adopt a middle level certificate and require it for teaching in grades 6 through 9. In response, teacher preparation institutions will create specialized programs.

According to the Educational Testing Service, 21 states offer a license specifically for the middle grades. However, 12 of those states also have a license for elementary or secondary teachers that includes the middle grades (i.e. K-7 and 7-12). Teachers in those 12 states could be assigned to middle schools without a middle grade certificate.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certifies teachers as Early Adolescence/Generalist and Early Adolescence/English Language Arts. National Board certification recognizes teachers who have met rigorous standards, as determined by their success on performance-based assessments. Twelve states will grant licenses to National Board certified teachers who come to teach in their states. Those states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Rhode Island. The assessment process is expensive and

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It would be unthinkable to assign to kindergarten or high schools teachers who are not trained and certified to teach children at those ages. Yet, that is common practice for middle schools.

time consuming. Financial incentives provided by states make it possible for middle grade teachers to pursue National Board certification. Ohio, for example, provided assessment fees for up to 400 teachers in the 1997-98 school year. Ohio teachers who complete the assessment receive enough continuing education credits to have their licenses renewed. Teachers who achieve certification receive an annual award of $2,500 for the life of the certificate. North Carolina's Excellent Schools Act provides funds to pay the assessment fee for teachers who complete the certification process. In addition, candidates for National Board certification get three days of release time to work on their portfolios and prepare for the assessment.[1]

Pre-Service Training

Simply grafting middle level programs on an outmoded system of teacher preparation, however, is insufficient. Training and standards for certification must be aligned with the standards for what students are expected to know and be able to do with school accreditation requirements. Redesigning the entire system is likely to be the most advantageous strategy to promote changes in the preparation of middle grade teachers. The current system is geared toward teachers of young children and teenagers, with little recognition of the distinctive needs of young adolescents. All teachers must be equipped to deal with curricula and assessments that demand more complex thinking and reasoning rather than rote memorization.

The redesign of any state system of teacher preparation must necessarily begin with the content standards for what students should know and be able to do. Student standards establish the framework for what teachers should know and be able to do. Teacher preparation standards have been developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the professional association that accredits pre-service programs in all states. In response to new accrediting standards, many institutions have undertaken major changes in their programs. Requiring that all teacher preparation institutions acquire NCATE accreditation, or meet tough state standards, would help to weed out weak programs that produce less skilled teachers. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, about 500 of 1,200 teacher education programs have received professional accreditation through NCATE.[2]

Standards for teacher training that reflect NCATE requirements generally require that:

- candidates be prepared in the subject matter standards of professional associations such as those of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics;
- candidates take a planned program rather than a smattering of courses of their choosing;
- candidates learn multiple strategies of instruction that enable them to work with a diversity of students;
- candidates be technologically literate; and
- candidates have an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill with students.

Demonstrating the art of teaching in real life situations requires teacher training programs to place greater emphasis on and to devote more time to internships. This aspect of teacher preparation is designed to overcome the disconnect between theory and practice. It presents an opportunity for teachers to learn how to work in teams, to acquire interpersonal skills important to participating in decision-making councils, and to relate successfully with students' families. These attributes, so important to reforming middle schools, are more likely to be acquired in clinical settings than in college classes.

The reform ferment in education and fiscal pressures to downsize and decentralize state education bureaucracies have actually led to closer partnerships between teacher preparation institutions and local schools. Texas and Ohio, among other states, have decentralized state functions while at the same time contracting out professional development responsibilities to regional service centers and county consortia, mostly to support in-service professional development. More than 200 (out of 1,200) schools of education have created professional development schools, according to the National Commission on

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Teaching and America's Future.[3] Professional development schools provide new recruits with intensive professional development, but they also can serve incumbent teachers.

The juncture of these two developments—education reform and fiscal pressure—that brings both pre-service and in-service teacher training in closer proximity to schools and districts suggests new directions for state policy. State and federal funds could be allocated to partnerships of higher education institutions, schools, regional centers, and school districts that operate professional development programs in order to forge a continuum of training. This kind of partnership is distinctly different from the traditional way of funding and regulating teacher training in the higher education system separately from in-service training in the K-12 system.

New Mexico Professional Development

New Mexico has developed a continuum of professional development centered on the middle grades that extends from instructional aides to college professors. It encompasses pre-service programs for instructional aides and teacher candidates, a masters degree program in middle level education for incumbent teachers, and in-service training for college professors. This continuum is supported by a partnership of the State Board of Education and the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque.[4] It is designed to accommodate a large and sparsely populated state with a significant American Indian population, as well as the needs of the state's largest and fastest growing school system.

In addition, preparation for assignments in middle grade schools is professionally recognized by the state's new optional middle level teaching certificate. State policymakers recognized that neither the elementary nor secondary certificate prepared teachers for coping with young adolescents. If changes in middle school education are going to spread to middle schools in New Mexico, an increasing pool of teachers is required.

The first stage on the continuum is an associate of arts degree for instructional aides in schools on or near Indian reservations. Far more Indians than ever who are paraprofessionals are becoming fully certified teachers. The goal is to create a career ladder program that will train more Native Americans as full-fledged teachers who can infuse native languages and culture into the curriculum. The associate's program is delivered off campus, primarily through distance learning formats.

The second facet of pre-service training places college students as teacher interns in middle grade classrooms, mostly in Albuquerque schools. Teams of student interns work with master teachers for a full year. The New Mexico Department of Education grants interns a one-year license until they graduate. When they do, they have had a full year of mentoring in public schools. The presence of full-time interns in middle schools releases middle school teachers to serve as mentors, not only to their own interns but also to practicing teachers. The one-year license meets the requirements of the union contract.

This arrangement provides a no-cost exchange of services between the school district and the university. The Albuquerque Public School system usually has about 46 master teachers. The salaries the district pays to these master teachers provide a staff of mentors available to other teachers in the system and to new recruits. In return, the University of New Mexico provides 46 classrooms with temporarily certified and supervised teacher interns.

The masters degree stage of the professional development continuum is provided through a "drive-in" program on eight weekends. An associated benefit of the masters program is collaboration between schools and the universities. College professors team teach with their masters degree candidates, giving university professors actual practice in relating the college curriculum to a classroom of young adolescents.

New Mexico's State Board of Education had previously endorsed the *Turning Points* principles as effective practice. With the university's masters degree program for middle level teachers, the board then approved a middle level certificate for entering teachers.

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- Comprehensive planning builds a state/local partnership to strengthen school health programs.
- State-initiated, community-based programs address children's needs in the context of their families, rather than focusing just on children in schools.
- Providing health coverage for uninsured young people is receiving greater attention by state governments.

CHAPTER 6

Improving Student Performance Through Better Health And Fitness

While it may seem self-evident that young adolescents must be healthy in order to learn, the school's traditional responsibility for students' health was narrowly defined. One person—the school nurse—provided first aid, maintained vaccination records, and called parents when their child became sick. That narrow concept of responsibility for children's health care has been supplanted by the realization that a far more comprehensive and preventative approach is needed. Ensuring that students are healthy and ready to learn requires more than inoculations against communicable diseases and first aid for injuries on school grounds.

States are trying to reform their health care and human service systems, just as they are engaged in the reform of public education systems. Current reform trends that are changing the approach to child and adolescent health and fitness vary in the degree to which schools are the central mechanism for service delivery. One approach is a movement based on a fundamental reconception of services away from the traditional categorical and specialized services and toward a more results-oriented focus on goals for meeting the needs of children and families within their communities. Another is a broadly conceived vision of school health, incorporating health education, nutrition, counseling, and the physical environment, as well as health services.

These efforts are not mutually exclusive. For example, both comprehensive school health planning and integrated, community-based services include families as part of their scope of concern.

Lately, what appears to be another trend in state policy provides medical insurance for uninsured children, particularly children of the working poor. Recent state programs help parents provide essential pediatric and acute care, even if they themselves are uninsured.

As these three initiatives indicate, much has changed in state policy since the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development issued *Turning Points* in 1990. The Carnegie Council's recommendations called for middle schools to accept responsibility for accessible health services, health education in the curriculum, and health-promoting environments in schools. Many middle schools have accepted this challenge because they confront every day basic problems that interfere with their students' educational development.

In the middle school years, adolescents can experience untreated medical problems—poor eye sight, hearing loss, dental cavities, and asthmatic or bronchial conditions. Because of their pubescence, young adolescents are especially vulnerable to peer pressure and self-inflicted behaviors. The leading causes of adolescent illness and death are accident, homicide, suicide, substance abuse, and reckless or unguarded sexual activity.

In addition, their parents or other care-givers may be coping with substance abuse or other problems that prevent them from providing for their children. Thus, the needs of students must be addressed within the context of their families.

The existing array of fragmented programs and agency structures creates obstacles to the delivery of health and other social services to the often multiple needs of children and families. Eligibility and service mandates of categorical programs inhibit flexible and innovative practices and collaboration among agency personnel. Funding

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is available to address problems after they occur, but not to prevent them. Beyond these obstacles, prevailing social service systems typically lack goals that are tied to desired results and accountability mechanisms that track whether those results are being achieved.

Integrated Services for Children, Youth and Families

The Healthy West Virginia Coalition, for example, is comprised of the State Health Education Council, the Wellness Council of West Virginia, Inc., the State Bureau of Public Health and the West Virginia State Medical Association. The Coalition conducted a review of state laws and policies, issued recommendations, and advised state legislators on the drafting of legislation. As a result the legislature passed a law requiring all children in grades K-8 to be given the President's Physical Fitness Test and to prohibit the use of tobacco products on school property.

Inter-agency collaboration allows states to develop new financing strategies that combine categorical funds as part of a statewide plan.

In addition to the Healthy West Virginia Coalition, the state legislature created the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth in 1990 that is creating partnerships between state agencies and local communities. Over 40 Family Resource Networks (FRNs) have been established representing single counties or a consortium of counties. FRNs are community-based, non-profit organizations that bring together health, education and human service providers who have established a local action plan under a start-up grant from the Cabinet. The Governor's Cabinet has legislative authority to combine funds from different sources or transfer funds within agencies or from one department to another.[1a]

The Governor of Arkansas formed the Governor's Partnership Council for Children and Families that is co-chaired by the directors of the state departments of health, education and human services. The Council advises a core team in the three state agencies that are responsible for helping schools plan and implement comprehensive school health policies. The Governor's Council and the state agencies work to put school health programs high on the priorities of private health organizations (e.g. cancer, lung, and heart societies). They also involve college departments and schools of education, public health, nursing, medicine, and social work in improving school health programs in their local areas.[1b]

Washington State's Family Policy Council, Missouri's Family Investment Trust, and Oregon's Commission on Children and Families are other examples of inter-agency collaborative structures. These entities are a mechanism for setting overall policy, planning and monitoring. They coordinate reform initiatives across education, health and human resources sectors and between public and private agencies.[1c]

Inter-agency collaboration allows states to develop new financing strategies that combine categorical funds as part of a statewide plan. Missouri is an example of a state that has implemented a joint budget strategy at the state level in support of community partnerships that decide on local priorities and deliver services through schools.[2] Its Caring Communities Program links health, mental health, employment and human services with education reform through 11 community partnerships. Seven of those partnerships have been providing services at 64 school sites for two years.

The partnerships are local entities that join with the state. They are public or private agencies, or ideally a combination of both. The partnerships work with school-site councils, members of which are educators, community members, parents, and social service providers. The school-site councils identify the community issues that match the Six Core Results of Missouri's Caring Communities Program that are the objective of state policy. These results are: (1) parents working, (2) children safe in their families and families safe in their communities,

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(3) children and families who are healthy, (4) children ready to enter school, (5) children succeeding in school, and (6) youth ready to enter productive adulthood. The councils and the partnerships create a plan and identify existing resources that address those needs. When that plan has been formulated, it goes to the state in order to locate resources that might not have been thought of or are unknown to the school-site council.

At the state level, five Missouri agencies—health, mental health, social services, education, labor and industrial relations—develop a joint budget for the Caring Communities Program and present it to the state legislature. When the joint budget is funded, money flows to a local fiscal agent, which may be the partnership, a local school district, a United Way, or some combination of both.

Overall policy and direction for the Caring Communities Program is provided by the Family Investment Trust. Although established by executive order, the Trust is not a state agency. The board of directors of the Trust is composed of the chief executive officers of the state departments of education, health, mental health, and human services, as well as business and civic leaders.

Kentucky's Family Resource Centers and Youth Service Centers were created as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. The Centers are located in areas where at least 20 percent of the students qualify for free school meals. The Family Resource Centers are in or near elementary schools. The Youth Service Centers are in or near schools serving students 12 years of age or older.[3]

All together, there were 573 centers serving 923 schools in Fiscal Year 1997 whose staff and operations are funded by a legislative appropriation. Center directors work with state staff and local service providers to identify resources to meet the needs of children, youth and families. Health care, counseling, and day care are the Centers' priorities, but the basic needs of children for clothing, nutrition, and housing also receive attention.

Comprehensive School Health Programs

Promising new approaches to school health are being undertaken by eight states that received planning grants from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Vermont's Comprehensive School Health Program illustrates the eight-point framework that these states are adopting. This comprehensive approach is an outgrowth of a joint statement signed in 1995 by Vermont's Secretary of Human Services and the Commissioner of Education. It is a school-based supportive program that encompasses activities within the school and the community. Guidelines for the Comprehensive School Health Program connect to the state's content standards, Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.[4] In addition, the Guidelines help schools to evaluate their own health program through a series of "critical questions" about its curriculum and instruction, its health services and its guidance and counseling program.

COMPONENTS OF VERMONT'S COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

1. Curriculum and instruction for health, safety and physical education that is both specific and integrated throughout the curriculum
2. Health Services
3. Guidance and school counseling program
4. Co-curricular programs and activities
5. Nutrition services and programs
6. Faculty and staff wellness programs
7. Healthy school environment
8. Strong family and community linkages

The Rhode Island Partnership of Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! is based on a similar eight-part strategy. The state's plan emerged from the year-long work of the Rhode Island School Health Advisory Council.[5] The state's content standards and assessments for health education, discussed on pages 16-17, fulfill one the state's goals that health education be a core subject in the K-12 curriculum. Other goals of the Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! agenda have been implemented in middle schools throughout the state, as illustrated in the following examples:

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- To encourage healthy choices, juice machines replaced soda machines in the Kickemuit Middle School in Warren.
- At the Villa Novan Health Hut, students at the Woonsocket Middle School, in Woonsocket, get help with starting a weight loss program, dealing with peer pressure, or getting a prescription to resolve ear infections.
- When students at Thompson Middle School in Newport say, "I'll meet you at the mall," they are not planning to go shopping. The Human Services Mall provides a wide variety of coordinated family mental health services to students. Providing these services on site helps create a supportive school environment and improves access to services.

OREGON'S EARLY ADOLESCENT INDICATORS

Percentage of students free of involvement with alcohol in previous month:

at 6th grade (89% 1994; 94% 1995; 99% 2010)

at 8th grade (70% 1994; 92% 1995; 99% 2010)

Percent of students free of involvement with illicit drugs in previous month:

at 8th grade (81% 1994; 95% 1995; 99% 2010)

Percent of children in grades 9-12 who exercise aerobically at least three times a week:

(70% 1993; 80% 1995; 99% 2010)

Percent of students at all grades who carry weapons to school:

(19% 1993; 0% 2010)

Source: Oregon Progress Board (December 1994) Oregon Benchmarks ñ Standards for Measuring Statewide Progress and Institutional Performance p. 31. Author

Middle schools in Florida can use state resources to establish on-site or easily accessible centers that provide a variety of education, health, social, and employment services to serve the needs of their children and families. Originally established by the Florida legislature as a competitive grant program for the specific purpose of creating "one stop service centers" that would provide comprehensive and integrated services, the state now provides a specific entitlement to school districts that can be used for four purposes, one of which is Full Service Schools.

Whatever the model—a comprehensive school health plan or a comprehensive, community-based strategy—states need a results-oriented monitoring system that can provide some measure of whether the goals are being attained. States can formulate measurable improvements in the condition of families and children as well as academic achievement. Then they can create a system of collecting and disseminating data to inform policymaking and justify budgets. Data are the basis upon which targets are set, outcomes are analyzed, and decisions made. Accurate data can support recommendations to the governor and legislature for eliminating ineffective programs and redeploying agency personnel.

One state that has established a system of accountability based on measurable indicators is Oregon. The state initiated Oregon Benchmarks in 1991 that provides an overall framework for measuring progress toward the state's goals. There are a variety of benchmarks that deal with people, the quality of life and the economy. The Legislature created the Oregon Progress Board, chaired by the Governor, which is charged with keeping the state focused on its strategic vision. In addition to selecting the benchmarks, the Progress Board collects data and publishes a biennial report called Oregon *Benchmarks-Standards for Measuring Statewide Progress and Institutional Performance*.[8]

Oregon's Commission on Children and Families selected 32 child and family benchmarks. Examples of benchmarks applicable to early adolescents are noted in the box below. The State Department of Education provides data that reflect the education reforms proposed by Oregon's Education Reform Act for the 21st Century. Student success in school is reported as the percentage of students who achieve established levels of performance, such as eighth grade reading, mathematics, and writing. The target is for 99 percent of eighth graders to accomplish the established performance levels by 2010. *Oregon Benchmarks* reports actual accomplishment each year.

Expanded Health Care Coverage For Uninsured Children

States have been pursuing health care for uninsured children. Most states have expanded Medicaid eligibility above the Federal poverty line.

Some are experimenting with creating insurance risk pools so that districts and even schools provide the insurance rather than provide the services directly. Therefore, schools are performing a role traditionally provided by employers.

The percentage of children under 18 years old who are covered by private health insurance has declined precipitously in the past decade.[7] Children eligible for Medicaid (the federal/state funded entitlement program that provides health care for both low-income children and adults) but not served comprise part of this population. Other children are uninsured because their working parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, because their parents' employers do not offer health insurance, or because parents can not afford the premiums.

Under current federal law, states are required to provide Medicaid coverage to children ages six and older born after September 30, 1983, who meet income eligibility criteria. States are enacting or considering their own efforts to insure children of the working poor. State initiatives are funded in a variety of ways, including increasing Medicaid eligibility above the federal poverty line, using state-funded insurance programs, and creating public-private partnerships.

Some programs operate on a sliding-fee basis, while others fully subsidize care.

Examples of recent state action include:

- New York's Child Health Plus Program is available to all children below age 19, as of January 1997.
- Minnesota covers all children, ages 2-18, living in families with incomes at or below 275 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Arkansas has expanded Medicaid eligibility to children 18 and younger in families whose incomes are up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- North Carolina is providing adolescents access to preventative health care services in school-based or school-linked health care programs through grants received from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Duke Endowment.
- Maryland provides a primary care benefits package for children ages six and older born after September 30, 1983, and whose income is below 185% of poverty (see above). Some school health centers funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided limited health service, including mental health.

Other proposals are pending in state legislatures. These programs are fairly modest in the number of children to be served. According to the National Governors' Association, an estimated 800,000 additional children would be covered under all the proposed or already enacted state initiatives.[8] This compares with the 10.2 million uninsured children as of 1995, according to the General Accounting Office.

States can formulate measurable improvements in the condition of families and children as well as academic achievement.

Nevertheless, states are moving on these fronts to provide more health and social service supports for children and their families and to adopt a more comprehensive approach to school health. This is a rapidly changing field across the states.

- States have a vital role to play in helping schools and districts involve families and communities in achieving healthy and academically successful young adolescents.
- Public reporting of school achievement and resources encourages open, two-way communication between schools and their constituents.

CHAPTER 7

Reengaging Families And Communities In The Education Of Young Adolescents

Parental and community involvement in education has historically been considered a strictly local matter in which the state plays no role. State officials may believe that state policies and regulations can or should do nothing to promote strong school community relations. This attitude may reflect a strong tradition of local control. Or it may simply be part of the trend away from state micro-management and prescription of school affairs.

The fact is, however, that the state's role in parent and community involvement is changing. Executive officials and state legislatures know that they must have the knowledgeable support of parents and all members of the community if they are to succeed in transforming public education to meet the demands of the 21st Century. Education is no longer left solely to the educators. Parent and community organizations are much more aggressive in challenging state policies on a whole range of issues from curriculum to school health. Major state employers are taking a more direct role in school affairs. Dissatisfaction with public schools has prompted states to enact laws creating charter schools and public school choice aimed at giving parents more direct control over their children's education. Some states have also mandated school governing councils that require parent participation. By providing information about school resources and performance, states actually strengthen the capacity of the local school community to exercise more direct control over school affairs.

In this environment, state policymakers must rethink their approach to engaging parents and communities. If the transformation of traditional junior high schools into high performance middle schools is going to expand beyond a few communities, states are going to have to exercise leadership that cultivates a constituency among parents for restructuring adolescent education.

A close working relationship between parents and educators is frequently stronger in pre-schools and the elementary grades. As children grow into adolescence, parent involvement tends to decline. Generally, the middle school is further from home than the elementary school. Parents' attention may be devoted to younger children in the family, leaving less time for adolescents. Anxious to exercise their new autonomy from home and family, young adolescents may not appreciate their parents' presence at school or knowledge of homework assignments. Middle grade educators may not encourage, and in fact may actively discourage, the direct involvement of parents, believing that school and peers have a more direct influence on adolescent behavior than do parents.

Recognizing these trends, the Carnegie Task Force on the Education of Young Adolescents emphasized reengaging families to highlight the still critical importance of parental influence in the learning and maturation of youngsters in this age group.

The Task Force, however, conceived of relations between parents and schools in a broader context. The vision of high performance middle schools illuminated in *Turning Points* is about more than adolescents' academic skills and knowledge, as important as those attributes are. The education of young adolescents must help them learn how to make sound personal and ethical choices, to become good citizens who contribute to

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their community, and to develop a sense of self-worth and confidence.

These are not extra-curricular competencies. They are central to building the capacity of young people to make the most out of their schooling and to acquire habits that will make them life-long learners.

State policies that support re-engaging families and communities promote open and honest communication among professional educators and parents, the public, business leaders, and youth-serving agencies.

Communication

Open and honest communication with parents is essential to establishing their trust and confidence in schools. It must be a two-way communication. Schools can not expect to secure parent involvement only on educators' own terms, unilaterally setting ground rules for what information is shared and what role parents are permitted to play in school affairs. Parents are less likely to support the school's academic and behavioral goals if they are only contacted when their child has a problem or when the school asks parents to volunteer. They require information in order to make informed judgements.

States have enacted a variety of laws to enable parents to have a more direct role in running the school. School site councils are viewed as a means of involving parents in school governance. Membership on the council conveys no legitimacy if parents have no decision-making authority, and are only expected to ratify what educators have already decided. Legislatures cannot mandate that human relationships actually work, but they can spell out the duties and privileges of members of the school site councils in a way that makes the intent clear. For example, state laws can prescribe that parent members are selected by parents, that parents constitute a majority, or that school employees cannot serve as parent members. Additionally, youth service workers or other community members who work closely with the school can be added as council members.

By providing information about school resources and performance, states actually strengthen the capacity of the local school community to exercise more direct control over school affairs.

School Profiles

School profiles are an increasingly common way to foster school/community relations by sharing information with parents and the public. State education departments collect extensive school-specific information. Computer technology now makes it feasible to report individual school information, even in a large state such as New York with 4,125 schools. The New York State Education Department embarked on such an initiative when it released school profiles for all schools in December 1996.[3]

New York State's School Report Cards are designed to answer three questions that a person at the local level is likely to ask:

1. How is this school doing?
2. How is this school doing compared to other schools?
3. How is this school doing compared to other similar schools?

A simple numerical value about achievement does not say much about how a school is doing without some reference point. One reference point is how a school is performing compared to the state's student performance standards. In New York's case, performance in reading on the Pupil Evaluation Program (the PEP test) is recorded as the percentage of all students in a grade who score above two levels—minimum and mastery—compared with state-wide percentages.

To give further meaning to these percentages, the School Report Cards provide examples of the reading material that is expected of students at both the mastery and minimum benchmarks. (See Appendix A.)

A second kind of reference point is the

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statewide average. Often, a state's many different schools demonstrate a wide variation of circumstances. New York has developed a model that groups schools by the age range of their students, the school district's capabilities, and the needs of the student population.

A school district's capabilities are measured by a need-to-resource capacity index of districts that combines demographic and financial data to divide districts into six different categories. The six categories are: low need, average need, high need rural, high need urban/suburban, New York City, and other large cities. Within the six categories of need-to-resource capacity, schools are separated into low, middle, and high ranges based on their percentage of students participating in the free lunch program. "If these groupings are well selected," states the Guide to School Report Cards, "the presentation of these similar schools' group statistics, together with single school statistics and district and statewide figures, will help everyone to evaluate fairly a school's performance, both in its own terms, and in the context of other schools' efforts."

In addition to including sixth grade reading performance, the School Report Card for a New York state school serving grades 6-8 includes student performance in grade 6 for mathematics and social studies and in grade 8 for social studies, along with sample questions from the test students have taken. For eighth-grade mathematics, the School Report Card shows the average percentage of eighth-grade enrollment passing and achieving mastery on the Regents Examination in Sequential Mathematics, Course I. (See Appendix A.)

Related school performance measures include attendance and suspension rates. Other information about each school includes student enrollment and the percentage receiving free lunch, number of personnel, and school per-pupil expenditure data.

School profiles, such as New York's School Report Cards, are an important part of a state's strategy to involve parents and the larger community in the effort to raise student achievement. Complete and honest information about schools enables parents and the school community to raise informed questions about how schools are performing. Public reports send a powerful message that the state cares about students' academic skills and knowledge.

School districts also may produce their own profiles. However, state reporting provides a broader portrait than locally produced information. A school whose scores are above its district's average may in reality be in the bottom third of schools statewide. Parents and school officials may be accustomed to seeing student achievement reported as the percentage of students achieving a minimum competency level. However, that can be a misleading figure because in many suburban districts, 90 percent of students routinely meet that standard. Including benchmarked information, such as minimum and mastery, provides more comprehensive information. In addition, calculating the number of students who passed a test as a percentage of students in a grade, as New York does for the Regents Examination in Sequential Mathematics, tells a much different story than if the pass rate is based only on the number of students who actually took the course and the exam.

Complete and honest information about schools enables parents and the school community to raise informed questions about how schools are performing.

School Budgets

School report cards contain information about outcomes. School budgets show how dollars are to be used. South Carolina is pioneering the use of school-level reporting for all of its 1,100 schools. (Appendix B is a sample of a school budget from Beck Middle School, Georgetown School District in South Carolina.)

The State Superintendent learned about the Finance Analysis Model for Education developed by the accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand and brought it to her state.(2) South Carolina has a uniform, statewide system of accounting codes,

making it possible to analyze schools' budgeting and spending across the state. With this tool, schools will know how much is spent on areas such as instruction and instructional support, on special education and other special programs, and on administration.

Comparisons across districts, much less schools, are impossible in states in which each district organizes its books in a different way. The Finance Analysis Model can be used to translate district bookkeeping into a standard format so that comparisons are possible. South Carolina already had standard accounting codes, so it purchased the software for the Finance Analysis Model from Coopers and Lybrand and trained district officials in its use.

A structured governance role for parents, school profiles, and school budgets are but three basic elements in reengaging families and communities.

Once district budgets were created, the state encouraged districts to produce a budget for each of their schools using the same model. To make school budgeting feasible, the state has provided software, hardware, and telecommunications to schools for record keeping and reporting that reduces paperwork for teachers and administrators. (See sample school budget in Appendix B.) With a grant from the Department of Education, the South Carolina School Boards Association is training school board members on the model so that they can ask questions about how individual schools are allocating their resources.

Each district and school in South Carolina receives a per-pupil allocation from the state, as well as funds from other sources. What each school does with its money becomes the issue. State officials hope that with this kind of detailed information districts and schools will be encouraged to implement school-based decision making.

A structured governance role for parents, school profiles, and school budgets are but three basic elements in reengaging families and communities. Restructuring middle grade schools into the kind of high performing institution envisioned by *Turning Points* requires concerted and continuous involvement of parents and the community. Even at the very preliminary stage when change is being considered, teachers and parents must share their views and exchange information. The restructuring of large junior highs into small "houses" or "families" or teaching a common core of knowledge to all students are radical changes in some school systems.

Supporting Parents

States have several ways of facilitating the dialogue between educators and parents about improving the education of young adolescents.

- The Maryland Department of Education has a booklet for parents that explains the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). The MSPAP Parent Handbook(3) is mailed to the parents of every student in grades 3, 5 and 8 who is scheduled to take the state assessment. The Handbook explains that the purpose of MSPAP is to raise expectations for learning and to hold all schools accountable for higher student performance. Sample tasks and student responses at each grade level illustrate the skills that students are expected to use.
- Schools could apply for small state incentive grants to be used to pay school staff and parents for planning time or for trips to visit schools that are further along in the process of restructuring.
- State officials can help schools and parents learn how to make use of state and federal funds designated for parent involvement. Title I schools, for example, must have a parent involvement component. The federal government also funds parent support centers under Goals 2000.

The decision to transform a traditional junior high school will require a great deal of self-examination on the part of the school community. School staff cannot expect to "sell" the idea to

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parents without bringing them fully into the decision-making process, sharing information, and establishing an environment of mutual trust and responsibility. The extent to which parents, not just teachers, become the advocates for transforming the education of young adolescents will determine whether the change is enthusiastically endorsed and whether increasing numbers of junior high schools will be convinced to make the change.

Collaboration With Community Resources

Establishing school-based youth services is a vital part of engaging the community and its resources in support of improved outcomes for adolescents. Youth services can be defined as both preventing youngsters from getting into trouble and providing assistance to a student's parents who face unemployment, inadequate housing or other problems.

The state role here involves the collaboration of human service agencies at the state and local levels. Such agencies might include those with responsibility for out-of-school-youth, day care, recreation, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse by both adults and teens; juvenile courts; employment agencies; private industry councils; and the public housing authority.

The state can also take advantage of the wide assortment of private, non-profit, community-based organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, church youth groups, fraternal service organizations, and mentoring programs sponsored by businesses.

The Maryland Business Roundtable (MBRT) has been very active in support of middle grade reform. In 1996-97, MBRT had partnerships with 12 middle schools. A partnership typically provides mentors for young teens and a senior business executive who serves as an all-around "critical friend" or coach to the faculty and administrators. Depending on a school's needs, a business partner might serve on and work with a school's planning team, provide management and planning expertise, or help monitor school results. The MBRT participates in state middle school association meetings and otherwise lends support to professional development conferences. The business community in Maryland has also provided political support in the legislature for reform initiatives, including reconstitution of low-performing schools and new regulations that, for the first time, tied teachers' license renewals to their performance evaluations.[9]

Grassroots community groups and local business executives do not have a history of working with school officials. But they can make important contributions to young adolescents and their families by providing after-school and weekend programs, and cultural and recreational excursions. By bringing agencies and organizations together, states can demonstrate how funds from different budgets can be pooled to pay for janitorial services and security that make evening programs possible.

States might provide small incentive grants for the initial planning effort or for long-term funding to pay the salary of an after-school coordinator. States that have supported school-based youth service centers require host school districts to contribute a percentage of the center's cost through direct financial contributions or in-kind contributions such as materials and facilities.

Establishing school-based youth services is a vital part of engaging the community and its resources in support of improved outcomes for adolescents.

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- Accountability systems keep the focus on achievement.
- Independent monitoring agencies serve as watch dogs of middle grade reform.
- State-supported research highlights schools that have restructured and achieved better outcomes for students.

CHAPTER 8

Initiating And Sustaining Comprehensive Middle Grade Reform

This Guide, thus far, has demonstrated the myriad policies—mandates, incentives, inter-agency collaboration, and technical assistance—that states can use to further middle grade reform.

States establish the academic skills and knowledge that they expect students to achieve by the end of middle school, and they create an assessment system that measures the extent to which students have achieved these competencies. They create a regulatory environment that makes it possible for schools to restructure the conventional organization of junior high schools. Teachers and administrators are provided professional development that prepares them to work successfully in the new environment. New teachers are prepared for assignments in high-performing middle schools. State leadership makes it possible for schools to address adolescent health issues and to enable families and communities to contribute to adolescent development both during and after school.

This final section addresses what states can and should do to sustain and expand middle grade reform. When parents and educators decide to undertake restructuring, the ultimate outcome of a high performing institution is not assured. Schools that are several years into the process of change may falter. Still other schools may call themselves "Turning Points middle schools," but they have adopted few of those principles.

Even with supportive state policies, many obstacles can derail the restructuring of adolescent education. A school may experience considerable changes in its enrollment. Neighborhood gangs, a large influx of immigrants, or repeated turnover of teachers and administrators may force schools to attend to more pressing issues than institutional change. Local leadership may change, bringing in a superintendent and school board members who are not supportive of middle grade reform. Indeed, changes in leadership at the state level may result in policies or priorities that undercut the direction of middle grade reform in local districts.

What can be done to institutionalize the reform of adolescent education? How can the reforms be expanded to other middle schools throughout the state?

Three strategies are recommended by state experience. First, a major investment in professional preparation of teachers is essential. As mentioned on pages 43-49, the aging of the teacher workforce portends a substantial cadre of new teachers. Second, states need an accountability system for tracking how all schools are making progress toward achieving state standards for all their students. Third, a state-level, independent body could be established that focuses on the status of middle grade reform and that is charged with making recommendations to the governor, legislature, state school board, and chief state school officer regarding necessary policies and actions.

An Accountability System

A state accountability system uses state assessments aligned to state standards to identify student achievement in all schools. States have learned that their assessments keep the attention of the entire public education system and the public focused on raising student achievement. State assessments are a tool for school accountability. They are also the basis for recognizing and rewarding schools.

An accountability system for schools is based on student performance levels or benchmarks that indicate

the degree of student proficiency in the knowledge tested. Using the results of state assessments administered in certain grades each year, the accountability system is then able to identify for each school the proportion of students who are at each benchmark in each subject.

The heart and soul of school reform in Maryland is the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). A critical component of MSPAP is a battery of tests administered in grades 3, 5 and 8. It is a measure of school performance, not individual performance, because no one student takes all parts of the battery. MSPAP is the keystone of the state's accountability system. A school meets state standards when 70 percent of its students achieve at the satisfactory level or above and 25 percent or more achieve at the excellent level or above in all subject areas.(1)

MSPAP results, together with attendance and dropout rates, are combined in a School Index that is used to assess a school's progress from one year to the next. Those schools that are farthest from meeting the satisfactory standard and whose Index reveals a decline in performance over three years are identified as "reconstitution" eligible and placed on the early warning system. When a school is so identified and before any formal action is recommended to the state board, the state superintendent consults with the local superintendent to ascertain whether any extenuating circumstances need to be considered.

After official notification by the state board of education, the state conducts an on-site review of the school, interviews parents and community members, and produces a written analysis of its circumstance. The school produces an

A SCHOOL IN RECONSTITUTION

Baltimore's Patterson High School was one of the first two high schools cited by the Maryland State Board of Education as reconstitution-eligible because of its low rankings and negative trends on dropout rates, student attendance, and achievement. Chaos in the learning environment made any progress impossible. Small bands of unruly students roamed the hallways. Repeated faculty efforts to restore order were unsuccessful. Over 80 percent of Patterson's ninth graders were not promoted to the 10th grade. Performance on the Maryland Functional Test required for graduation was dismal. Only 25 percent of ninth graders passed the math portion.

Under a plan approved by the Maryland State Board of Education, Patterson's administrators and faculty joined forces with researchers and staff from CRESPAR—the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk operated jointly by the Johns Hopkins University and Howard University. In the 1994-95 school year, Patterson developed its improvement plan. Transformation of the school began in earnest in the 1995-96 school year.

The most dramatic organizational change was the establishment of five academies, each in a self-contained school within the building. The ninth grade is housed in one wing of the school as the Ninth Grade Success Academy. It has its own entrance, its own principal and faculty, and its own classrooms. The teaching faculty is divided into five teams, each of which teaches a common group of 150 to 180 students. The school day is divided into a four-period block schedule. The Board also established advisories, before-and after-school coaching, a full-time health suite, a staff of guidance counselors and social workers and psychologists, and a twilight school for students with serious discipline problems.

Teacher surveys, attendance figures, and promotion rates at the end of the second year provide an early indication that Patterson has begun to reconstitute itself. In that year, only 27.2 percent of ninth grade teachers believed that the school's learning climate was not conducive to student achievement, a substantial decline from the 80 percent who felt that way in the first year. Ninth grade attendance was up 9.4 percent in the second year. And 69.1 percent of ninth graders were "poised" for promotion in the second year, compared to 47.3 percent in the first year.(3)

improvement plan based on that analysis and other data sources. The plan is expected to show that school officials have thought through their problems, have demonstrated that they know how to use data and other sources of information, and have a strong focus on achieving better outcomes for all children.

The state board of education approves the school improvement plan. Local officials and school staff are responsible for its implementation. Once a school is in reconstitution, it remains in that status for at least three years. Since Maryland's accountability system was instituted in 1993, 90 schools have been identified as reconstitution-eligible. If improvement does not occur, state officials consider other options, including possible involvement of third parties (such as higher education institutions) to work with the school until its performance has turned around. No predetermined period is established for the state to relinquish its involvement in reconstitution schools. The state's experience, however, has shown that most school improvement efforts take three to five years.

Maryland's School Performance Recognition Program recognizes middle schools that are making substantial and sustained progress toward achieving state standards for school performance. These monetary awards are an incentive for schools to continue making improvement. They also give public recognition for the work of teachers, principals, parents, and community members who contributed to the improvement of student learning.

School districts are also covered by the accountability system. To meet the state's standards, 70 percent of a district's students must have registered at least satisfactory on the MSPAP. On the Functional Test required for high school graduation, 96 percent of eleventh graders must have passed all four parts for school systems to reach the excellent standard and 90 percent of eleventh graders must have passed all four parts to achieve the satisfactory level.

Texas' accountability system goes one step beyond Maryland's by setting performance standards for student groups (African American, Hispanic, white, and economically disadvantaged) as well as for the total enrollment, exclusive of special education students.[3] The base indicators of the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) are scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test, dropout rates and attendance. The TAAS is given to all students in grades three through eight, and grade ten. Scores on the reading, writing, and mathematics portions of the TAAS are considered base indicators. Scores on science and social studies are reported but not benchmarked as base indicators. Reading and mathematics tests in Spanish are administered in grades three through six, and a Spanish writing exam is given to fourth graders. No decision has been made regarding whether Spanish language tests will be added to the accountability index.

The four school performance standards in the AEIS are: (1.) exemplary, (2.) recognized, (3.) acceptable, and (4.) low performing. The acceptable rating (3) for schools for 1998 requires that 40 percent of all students exclusive of special education students and 40 percent of each student group pass each subject area on the TAAS. That is an increase from 1996 when 30 percent was the benchmark for all students and each student group, exclusive of special education students. These benchmarks will increase to 45 percent in 1999 and 50 percent in 2000. To achieve the recognized standard (2) in 1998, 1999 and 2000, at least 80 percent of all students and each student group, exclusive of special education students must pass the TAAS in all subject areas, an increase of five percentage points over 1997.

States have learned that their assessments keep the attention of the entire public education system and the public focused on raising student achievement.

The Academic Excellence Indicator System reports are released to schools in the fall of every year. The system indicates schools that are eligible for awards and sanctions. School report cards are issued to every family. High-performing campuses

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may receive monetary awards through a performance incentive program, with funds awarded to be spent at the discretion of the Site-Based Decision-Making Committee. The highest performing districts and schools are also exempted from specific regulations and requirements.

A low-performing campus, which is a school where fewer than 40 percent of all students exclusive of special education students or fewer than 40 percent of any one student group passes the reading, writing and mathematics parts of the TAAS, is subject to state intervention, as the Commissioner of Education determines necessary. Sanctions can include a public notice of deficiency and the preparation of a student achievement improvement plan that addresses each area of deficiency. The Commissioner can also appoint a special campus intervention team to conduct a review of the school or district and make recommendations, to provide technical assistance to the school, and to monitor the plan's implementation. If a school remains low-performing for more than one or two years, more stringent state intervention is possible. The Commissioner has a number of options to utilize with low-performing schools or districts. They include replacing the school board, or appointing a special master or management team to oversee the school or district.

The purpose of the independent panel is not to duplicate the work of the state department of education but to act as an independent advisor to state officials.

An Independent Monitoring Capacity

An accountability mechanism of a different sort is an independent body created and funded by the legislature to monitor and report on the progress toward increasing the number of high performing middle schools. It is responsible for making annual reports to the legislature, the governor, and the superintendent of public instruction. It monitors implementation of middle school reform efforts and makes recommendations regarding policies and actions that are required to sustain and expand reform. A small professional staff aids in its work. The purpose of the independent panel is not to duplicate the work of the state department of education but to act as an independent advisor to state officials.

An independent panel like this exists in South Carolina. South Carolina's Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984 created the EIA Select Committee as a watch dog for the General Assembly to oversee the implementation of the reform act in that year and of the Target 2000 reform law of 1989.[9] It has 12 members, including eight legislative appointees, the head of the K-12 system and the commissioner of higher education. State law governs the responsibilities of the Select Committee. Its general duties include:

- reviewing and monitoring EIA programs and funding to ensure that money is wisely spent;
- making recommendations to the General Assembly regarding programs, funding, and the general progress of education reform;
- recommending programmatic changes to state agencies.

During tight budget years, the Select Committee protected funds to carry out EIA reforms that might otherwise have gone to the general fund. Thirteen years after the state's landmark education reform act, the EIA Select Committee continues to monitor reforms and assess the state's future educational needs.

Additional examples of functions for an independent monitoring body might include asking:

- Does the state department of education have strategies that are sufficient to promote and measure reform? Is its data collection and analysis adequate? Has it been successful in stimulating the creation of mentoring networks for middle grade educators? Are professional development centers accessible to all middle level schools? Has the department created the capacity to provide effective technical assistance to middle schools that consistently rank lowest on student achievement?
- Are teacher training institutions changing their programs to prepare prospective teachers for

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working successfully in the middle level grades? Has the state licensing body established a middle grade certificate?

- Does the state system of financing education provide all middle level schools with the resources necessary to enable early adolescents to achieve the state standards at the middle grades? Does state funding provide extra resources to schools with many high-need students or to schools in districts with low property valuation? What is the gap in per-pupil funding for middle grade schools, and is it narrowing or widening?
- What gaps exist in health services for early adolescents? What action is required to address identified needs in services? Are middle level schools connected to local social and health networks?

Keep the Spotlight on Middle Grade Reform and Set Goals for Young Adolescents

State agencies are major collectors and purveyors of data on student performance and well-being. States can sustain reform of schooling for young adolescents when they use the vast data they collect in strategic ways. The public is accustomed to hearing negative news about public education. Learning about valid and reliable indicators of progress helps support the accomplishments of students, parents, and educators. Achievement and attendance data collected by state departments of education should be available for research funded by state universities to identify and track high-performing middle schools. It is in the interest of the higher education community to support higher student achievement, most especially among minority and low-income students. Middle grade students are only a few years away from the crucial decisions about postsecondary education. In addition, widely publicized studies of high-performing middle schools can be used as exemplars for middle grade networks, professional associations, and parents.

State departments of health, human services, and of children and families have a wide assortment of data about such factors as births to teenagers, teen violent death rates, child abuse, households below the poverty line, and other indicators relevant to identifying and tracking non-academic evidence of individual and family well-being essential to adolescent development. Some states are developing a data management system that tracks data and sets performance goals based on desired results.

Oregon is probably the most advanced in developing such a system. The Oregon Progress Board tracks data on all the state's established benchmarks at established intervals. State and local agencies align their data collection with agreed-upon benchmarks. The state Commission on Children and Families, for example, aggregates county data on 32 benchmarks. The Department of Education has data on academic achievement from its statewide assessment program, including the percentage of eighth graders who achieved student performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. The Oregon Progress Board issues a report every other year to the legislature and the public. Excerpts from that report, Oregon Benchmarks, contain historical data but also set targets for intervals until 2010. (See accompanying chart.)

States can sustain reform of schooling for young adolescents when they use the vast data they collect in strategic ways.

States can use data to analyze trends and problems, to identify urgent and long-range needs, and to set measurable targets to monitor and guide state and county progress toward improving the health and well-being of children, youth and families. Further, the state agencies should publish the data so it can be reported to the legislature and brought to the attention of public and private organizations that are working to improve conditions in their communities.

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OREGON BENCHMARKS

Education	1980	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	2000	2010
KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12										
22. High school drop-out rate		6.6	6.5	5.8	5.7	6.6	7.4		5.7	4.6
23. Percentage of 8th graders who achieve established skill levels										
a. Reading			86%	84%	82%	87%	87%	89%	92%	100%
b. Math			75%	84%	83%	83%	84%	84%	89%	100%
24. Percentage of 3rd graders who achieve established skill levels										
a. Reading			86%	89%	89%	90%	89%	93%	95%	100%
b. Math			75%	84%	85%	84%	85%	86%	90%	100%
25. Percentage of high school students who have completed a structured work experience, including a practicum, clinical experience, community service learning, or school-based enterprise program					9%	13%	21%		65%	100%
POST SECONDARY										
26. Percentage of Oregon adults (age 25 and older) who have completed a baccalaureate degree		18%	23%		25%	26%		29%	33%	45%
27. Percentage of Oregon adults (age 25 and older) who have completed high school or an equivalent program		76%	85%		82%	89%		91%	94%	100%
28. Percentage of Oregon adults (age 25 and older) who have completed some college		39%	53%		53%	58%		60%	68%	89%
29. Percentage of Oregon adults (age 25 and older) who have completed an associate degree in professional-technical education						4%		4%	6%	10%
SKILL DEVELOPMENT										
30. Percentage of all Oregon adults (age 25 and older) with intermediate literacy skills										
a. Prose		41%							48%	55%
b. Document		36%							46%	55%
c. Quantitative		39%							47%	55%
d. Oral Listening										
e. Writing										
31. Percentage of Oregon adults (age 25 and older) who report they use a computer to create or edit documents or graphics, or to analyze data						50%		58%	61%	70%
32. Percentage of Oregon adults (age 25 and older) in the labor force who received at least 20 hours of skills training in the past year						41%		71%	79%	100%

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The vision of middle school reform is a set of coherent strategies articulated in the eight principles of *Turning Points*. While the implementation of each of these strategies contributes to realizing that vision, the larger question is how to nurture and challenge children who are in the particularly vulnerable stage of early adolescence, to be effective learners, to be healthy, and to prepare for a productive adulthood.

The question for state legislatures, school boards, and state agencies is how they can exercise their leadership to bring the vision of middle school reform closer to reality. The roles for states lie in three over-arching areas.

Build Capacity In Schools and Districts

Capacity must be developed by the practitioners themselves. Networks of schools, teachers, principals, and school coaches enable them to learn from each other how to implement the principles of *Turning Points*, how to make mid-course corrections, and how to build on the momentum of change. States support that capacity-building by helping people at all levels to assume new roles and to rethink how existing resources are spent.

States put information into the hands of educators and parents who show how it can be used to ask questions, raise achievement, and improve conditions for young adolescents and their families. The use of a self-study, school report cards, and school budgets are three tools that states can use to fulfill their information function.

Maintaining support for middle grade reform over the long term requires building an infrastructure among educational institutions and educating and engaging the public. Nothing will sustain reform more than a constituency that demands high performance middle schools. The ability of teachers and administrators to respond to that demand means rebuilding the foundations of public education based on new norms. State policies focus on achieving results in how schools operate, how professionals are trained, how resources for healthy students are employed, and in what students learn. Casualties are no longer acceptable.

Establish Goals and Monitor Performance

Education is both a local and a state responsibility. Finding a suitable balance between local and state authority is easy to articulate but not always easy to accomplish. The general trend in education reform is moving away from state regulation and toward local flexibility. However, even in those states that have substantially de-regulated, authorized charter schools, or provided public school choice, legislatures have actually strengthened their state's responsibilities for setting standards, monitoring student performance, and holding districts and schools responsible for results.

Many states have a whole new apparatus by which to set goals for performance of young adolescents and the schools and communities in which they live. Standards for what young adolescents should know and be able to do are the lodestone for transforming middle grade education.

Reform The State's Responsibility

Training and licensing teachers and administrators are pre-eminent state responsibilities. Preparing professional educators is one of the major functions of a state's system of public higher education. Only states set standards for and award licenses in hundreds of professional occupations, including teaching and administration. Nowhere is state leadership more urgent than in redesigning the way in which future teachers and administrators are educated. Higher education governing authorities must join forces with state boards of education to upgrade colleges of education. Licensing standards should be aligned with standards for students and teachers.

States also have major responsibility for public health and the welfare of minors. Several states are pioneering new policies to fund and deliver services for children and families that cut across traditional boundaries. They require social service providers, health care professionals, and educators to coordinate services in state bureaucracies and in local partnerships. States are redefining local roles as well as their own.

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(Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the City of Los Angeles.

* Service learning is sometimes known in different states as community service.

The New York State School Report Card for I.S. 218
Salome Urena Middle Academies

A Focus on Academic Performance

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
January 3, 1997

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ABOUT THIS SCHOOL (1995-96)

Overview

This is a report of this school's performance. We hope it is used to help all students achieve high standards.

This report is not a comprehensive review of all aspects of this school's programs. It presents certain key measures of core academic performance. Just as a student's report card should not be used as the sole measure of a young person, so this school report card should not be the single measure of this school. Like the temperature, pulse, and blood pressure of a patient, the information in this report doesn't tell everything, but to a concerned person, it can indicate a lot.

The Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York has approved State learning standards. In brief, the approved standards are for the following curriculum areas:

- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- English Language Arts
- The Arts
- Language Other Than English
- Health, Physical Education, and Home Economics
- Social Studies
- Career Development and Occupational Studies

This report is based on valid and reliable data from schools across the State. Information is reported for representative curriculum areas, including mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies. Secondary school reports also include information about languages other than English and about occupational studies. When comparable data are available for other areas, they too will be included. As new State assessments are implemented, The New York State School Report Card will show their results.

This report shows information about this school, this district, all public schools, and similar schools. Similar schools are identified across the State by a combination of three characteristics. First, similar schools teach the same grade levels. Second, similar schools are alike in relative resources, as indicated by the district's reported ability to pay for school programs. Finally, similar schools are alike in relative educational needs, as indicated by the proportion of children receiving free lunches. Statistics in this report are the best information available on December 13, 1996.

The State Education Department is committed to reporting information about students with disabilities and about students with limited English proficiency. At this time, little information about these groups is available to us for each school. However, we encourage discussion of the performance of all children.

This report only hints at the wealth of information available at this school. We urge you to:

- Seek out additional information;
- Discuss with teachers and the principal in this school how all students are doing in all their programs;
- Review programs and scheduling options which are available;
- Learn how this school plans to help all students meet high standards;
- Find out what the strategies are to achieve these goals and who is working on them;
- Discover what resources are available and how they are used;

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- Inquire about opportunities for applied learning and work experience; and
- Explore how partnerships are established with the community.

Active involvement of the community in support of this school is vital to the success of all the children.

We invite your comments. All suggestions will be considered in evolving future versions of The New York State School Report Card.

Reading—Grade 6

The grade 6 reading test measures English reading effectiveness. Pupils who score below the State minimum level must be given remedial instruction in reading. The following passage is an example of material that sixth-graders must be able to read and understand to score above the State minimum standard:

> *The people of Greece used the alphabet of the Semites. At first the Greeks wrote from right to left and left to right in alternating lines. The Greek name for this system of writing came from their words for "ox" and "turn." The method reminded them of oxen going back and forth, plowing a field. Eventually, the Greeks wrote only in one direction, as most people do now.*

The Board of Regents has set a standard for school performance on this test. Beginning in 1996-97, 90 percent of tested students in each school must score above the State minimum. The table below shows the percentage of students who scored above the State minimum in each of the last three years. This school is compared with this district, similar schools, and all public schools. Percentages for schools with few pupils are more affected by individual performance than are those for larger schools. An asterisk (*) with a statistic indicates a variance in regulations which may affect comparability. School administrators can provide more details.

Percentage Above State Minimum Level

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
This School	39%	50%	43%
This District	52%	58%	55%
Similar Schools	49%	55%	50%
All Public Schools	83%	84%	82%

Grade 6 Students Enrolled and Tested in This School

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Number Enrolled	393	448	435
Number Tested	333	374	362

How Well Can Sixth-Graders Read?

The grade 6 reading test identifies pupils who can read at different levels. The table below shows four reading levels. Examples of reading material and the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) equivalence (at P = .70) are shown for each level. DRP is a standard measure of reading effectiveness. The bars on the chart show the percentage of sixth-graders in this school and statewide who, with regular classroom instruction, can read and understand material at each level.

Sample Material at Four Reading Levels	Percentage of Pupils, Spring 1996: This School	Statewide
Mastery Level		
Front page of The New York Times and fiction such as Moby Dick (DRP = 70)	6%	46%
Articles in magazines such as Newsweek and Time and fiction such as The House of The Seven Gables and Ivanhoe (DRP = 65)	15%	61%
Articles in teen magazines such as Boy's Life and Seventeen and fiction such as Little Women and Blue Sword (DRP = 60)	29%	74%
Minimum Level		
Typical grade 6 textbooks and fiction such as Treasure Island and Westing Game (DRP = 56) (DRP at P = .70)	43%	82%

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Mathematics—Grade 6

The grade 6 mathematics test measures skills in the following areas:

- numbers and numeration;
- adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing whole numbers;
- operations with fractions;
- probability and statistics; and
- simple geometry and measurement.

Students who score below the State minimum level must be given remedial instruction in mathematics.

Beginning in 1996-97, the Regents require that 90 percent of tested students in each school score above the State minimum. The table below shows the percentage of sixth-graders who scored above the State minimum in each of the last three years. This school is compared with this district, similar schools, and all public schools. Percentages for schools with few pupils are more affected by individual performance than are those for larger schools. An asterisk (*) with a statistic indicates a variance in regulations which may affect comparability. School administrators can provide more details.

Percentage Above State Minimum Level

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
This School	65%	68%	77%
This District	74%	72%	80%
Similar Schools	67%	69%	76%
All Public Schools	91%	92%	93%

Grade 6 Students Enrolled and Tested in This School

Number Enrolled	393	448	435
Number Tested	380	426	415

SAMPLE PROBLEMS FROM THE GRADE 6 MATHEMATICS TEST

Numbers and Numeration

What is 8.47 rounded to the nearest whole number?

A) 9
B) 8.5
C) 8.4
D) 8

Operation with Whole Numbers

A group of 18 people is going on a trip. Each car holds 4 people. How many cars are needed?

A) 6
B) 5
C) 3
D) 4

Operations with Fractions

Solve:

7.2 – 3.85

A) 3.35
B) 4.35
C) 4.65
D) 11.05

Probability and Statistics

The highest temperatures in White Plains during the week of July 4 were 78, 90, 84, 79, 93, 81, and 83 degrees Fahrenheit. What is the mean (average) of these temperatures?

A) 78
B) 84
C) 88
D) 93

Geometry and Measurement

What additional information is needed to solve this problem? Kim's parents own a farm. The total area of their farm is 10,000 square meters. If the length of the vegetable garden is 100 meters, how much fencing is needed to enclose the garden?

A) the number of vegetables in the garden
B) the width of the garden
C) the length of the farm
D) the number of animals on the farm.

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Social Studies—Grade 6

The grade 6 social studies test measures the effectiveness of the social studies program. The first part assesses the content, concepts, and skills in the K–6 New York State Social Studies Syllabus. In the second part, pupils write an essay. The table below shows average scores on the two parts and on the combined test. The table compares this school with this district, similar schools, and all public schools. Scores for schools with few pupils are more affected by individual performance than are those for larger schools. An asterisk (*) with a statistic indicates a variance in regulations which may affect comparability. School administrators can provide more details.

A percentile rank is provided for the school's combined test score to indicate how the school compares with other schools in the State. The percentile rank for this school is 5. This rank means that this school's combined test score is equal to or higher than the combined test score of 5 percent of all public schools.

Average Scores On The Grade 6 Social Studies Test In 1996

	Multiple Choice (Out of 50)	Essay (Out of 10)	Combined (Out of 60)
This School	25.7	7.4	33.2
This District	28.3	6.7	34.9
Similar Schools	27.5	6.4	34.1
All Public Schools	35.3	7.7	43.1
Number of students enrolled:	435		
Number of students tested:	394		

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM GRADE 6 SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

Multiple Choice Test

A direct result of the building of the Erie Canal was that

A) western New York was opened to development.
B) large groups of people moved east.
C) river travel decreased in importance.
D) shipping costs increased.

Essay Test

Many people leave the country they were born in to start a new life in a new and unfamiliar country. Write an essay of about 150 words stating three reasons people leave their homeland to live in a new country and telling about three problems they may face in the new country.

Social Studies—Grade 8

The grade 8 social studies test measures the effectiveness of the social studies program. The first part assesses the content, concepts, and skills in the State syllabus United States and New York State History. In the second part, students write two essays. The table below shows average scores on each part of the test and on the combined test. The table compares this school with this district, similar schools, and all public schools. Scores for schools with few pupils are more affected by individual performance than are those for larger schools. An asterisk (*) with a statistic indicates a variance in regulations which may affect comparability. School administrators can provide more details.

A percentile rank is provided for the school's combined test score to indicate how the school compares with other schools in the State. The percentile rank for this school is 5. This rank means that this school's combined test score is equal to or higher than the combined test score of 5 percent of all public schools.

Average Scores On The Grade 8 Social Studies Test In 1996

	Multiple-Choice (Out of 50)	Essay (Out of 10)	Combined (Out of 60)
This School	21.9	11.5	33.3
This District	24.1	11.4	35.7
Similar Schools	23.5	11.0	34.7
All Public Schools	32.3	13.5	46.1
Number of students enrolled:	420		
Number of students tested:	390		

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM GRADE 8
SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

Objective Question

Which fundamental principle of government is expressed in the Declaration of Independence?

A. Government based on the consent of the governed.
B. Division of powers between Federal and state governments.
C. Direct election of public officials.
D. Responsibility of government for free education.

Essay Question

Throughout its history, the United States has adopted different foreign policy positions for different reasons. Several foreign policy positions are listed below.

- Neutrality, 1790-1812
- Territorial expansion, 1830-1916
- Isolation after World War I, 1918-1941
- Containment after World War II, 1947-1972
- Detente, 1970-1979

Select one foreign policy position from the list. Write an essay discussing the basic idea or goal of the United States foreign policy you have selected, one reason the policy was adopted, and one result of the policy.

The Regents Examination for Sequential Mathematics, Course I

This test measures achievement in the first course in the high school mathematics sequence. The course presents the basics of elementary algebra, plane geometry, probability, statistics, and logic. With these skills, students are more likely to qualify for higher-paying jobs and to succeed in college. A score of 65 is required to pass; a score of 85 or higher is considered mastery.

The table below shows the percentage of average grade enrollment passing—and the percentage achieving mastery—on the Regents Examination in Sequential Mathematics, Course I for each of the previous three years. The table compares this school, this district, similar schools, and all public schools statewide. It also presents the average grade enrollment and the number tested in this school. Because many students take this test in grade 8, average grade enrollment for this test is the sum of June grade level enrollments from grade 8 to 12 divided by the number of these grades in this school. Percentages for schools with few pupils are more affected by individual performance than are those for larger schools. An asterisk (*) with a statistic indicates a variance in regulations which may affect comparability. School administrators can provide more details.

Percentage of Average Grade Enrollment Passing and Percentage Demonstrating Mastery

	1993-94		1994-95		1995-96	
	Passing	Mastery	Passing	Mastery	Passing	Mastery
This School	0%	0%	6%	2%	68%	36%
This District	12%	6%	9%	5%	13%	9%
Similar Schools	18%	7%	10%	4%	13%	7%
All Public Schools	55%	28%	53%	26%	64%	36%

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Average Grade Enrollment	0	500	25
Number Tested	0	33	24

Other Performance Related Measures

Other factors which may impact on student performance include attendance and suspension.

Attendance Rate

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
This School	87.2%	88.6%	90.3%
All Public Schools	91.1%	90.9%	91.4%

Every minor between the ages of 6 and 16 who is physically and mentally able must attend school, public or otherwise, on a full-time basis. Absence from school is not permissible without reasonable explanation and cause. Attendance rate is the ratio of the number of actual student attendance days to the number of student attendance days which would occur if every student were present every school day.

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Suspension Rate

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
This School	0.6%	3.6%	1.9%
All Public Schools	4.4%	4.5%	4.5%

Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for one full school day or longer. For this measure, a student who has been suspended is counted once regardless of the number of times he or she was suspended. School policies concerning when it is appropriate and permissible to suspend a student may vary from school to school and will be reflected in the suspension rates displayed. The suspension rate is the ratio of students suspended to the number of students enrolled in October.

About This School (1995-96)

School Name: I.S. 218 Salome Urena Middle Academies
Principal: Dr. Betty A. Rosa
Phone: (212) 567-2322
School District: New York City Community School District # 6
Enrollment: 1,376
Grade Range: 6-8
School Code: 31-06-00-01-0218

Number of:
Teachers 99
Other Professionals 16
Paraprofessionals 20

Comparison Information

	This School			1995-96 Comparison	
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	This District	New York State Public
Percentage of Pupils eligible For free lunch	84.9	95.9	99.2	86.5	37.0%
Percentage of Limited English Proficient Pupils	30.6	31.6	40.0	48.9	7.9%

Enrollment

The number of pupils in grades Kindergarten through 12, including ungraded classes for pupils with disabilities. Values in this table are reported on Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) forms in October of the school year. Percentages in this table are computed using enrollment as the denominator.

SIMILAR SCHOOLS GROUP

This is a middle level school in New York City.

On the table of Similar School groups, this is part of Group # 21.

1994-95 PUBLIC SCHOOL EXPENDITURE

Total Expenditure per Pupil Unit
This District: $ 8,301 Statewide: $ 9,162
AOE per TAPU for Expense
This District: $ 5,256 Statewide: $ 6,013

Total Expenditure per Pupil Unit

The total of General, Debt Service, Special Aid, and Risk Retention Fund expenditures divided by Duplicated Combined Adjusted Average Daily Membership (DCAADM). Source data are from the Annual Financial Report (Form ST-3), State Aid worksheets, and Basic educational Data System (BEDS) forms. This value portrays expenditures for a wide range of district purposes.

Approved Operating Expenditure (AOE) per Total Aidable Pupil Unit (TAPU) for Expense

Annual operating expense (excluding capital outlays, debt service, transportation, and BOCES) divided by total aidable pupil units (TAPU) for expense. Source data are reported on the Annual Financial Report (Form ST-3) and State Aid worksheets. This value portrays day-to-day operating expenditures.

Note: Expenditure values are technical ratios and should be viewed as indicators of relative district resource use.

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E-1 Total School Spending — BECK MIDDLE #2201002

Total School Spending		This School		Average Middle		% To Total
District Pupil Enrollment	$6,155 924	Amount	% To Total School	Per Pupil	Per Pupil	Variance	District Per Pupil
Total		$4,339,034	100.0%	$4,696	$4,839	-3.0%	76.3%
Instruction		2,735,496	63.0%	$2,960	$2,967	-0.2%	48.1%
Teaching		2,616,143	60.3%	$2,831	$2,819	0.4%	46.0%
	Instr. Teachers	2,473,376	57.0%	$2,677	$2,652	0.9%	43.5%
	Substitutes	29,563	0.7%	$32	$31	2.1%	0.5%
	Instr. Paraprof.	113,204	2.6%	$123	$135	-9.5%	2.0%
Classroom Material		119,353	2.5%	$129	$148	-12.8%	21%
	Pupil Technology	37,141	0.9%	$40	$48	-15.4%	0.7%
	Instr. Material	82,212	1.9%	$89	$101	-11.6%	1.4%
Support		477,853	11.0%	$517	$558	-7.2%	8.4%
Student Support		364,426	8.4%	$394	$422	-6.5%	6.4%
	Guidance	128,579	3.0%	$139	$146	-4.5%	2.3%
	Library Media	199,879	4.6%	$216	$214	1.1%	3.5%
	Extracurricular	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
	Student Health	35,968	0.8%	$39	$62	-37.4%	0.6%
Teacher Support		86,205	2.0%	$93	$107	-12.7%	1.5%
	Curriculum Development	63,045	1.5%	$68	$75	-9.3%	1.1%
	Staff Development	23,160	0.5%	$25	$32	-20.7%	0.4%
	Sabbaticals	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
Program Support		27,222	0.6%	$29	$29	1.7%	0.5%
	Program Development	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
	Therapists et al.	27,222	0.6%	$29	$29	1.7%	0.5%
Operations		767,672	17.7%	$831	$869	-4.4%	13.5%
Student Services		281,595	6.5%	$305	$348	-12.5%	5.0%
	Transportation	47,875	1.1%	$52	$75	-31.0%	0.8%
	Food Service	232,820	5.4%	$252	$272	-7.5%	4.1%
	Safety	900	0.0%	$1	$1	3.2%	0.0%
School Facilities		417,407	9.6%	$452	$441	2.4%	7.3%
	School Buildings	417,407	9.6%	$452	$441	2.4%	7.3%
	Non-School Buildings	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Business Services		68,670	1.6%	$74	$60	-6.7%	1.2%
	Data Processing	68,670	1.6%	$74	$80	-6.7%	1.2%
	Business Operations	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
Leadership		358,013	8.3%	$387	$445	-12.8%	6.3%
School Management		358,013	8.3%	$387	$445	-12.8%	6.3%
	Principals	274,240	6.3%	$297	$337	-11.9%	4.8%
	School Office	83,773	1.9%	$91	$108	-15.9%	1.5%
Prog./Ops. Management		0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
	Deputies et al.	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
District Management		0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
	Superintendent/Board	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%
	Legal	0	0.0%	$0	$0	0.0%	0.0%

Georgetown School District
1996-1996 Budget
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Middle Grade School
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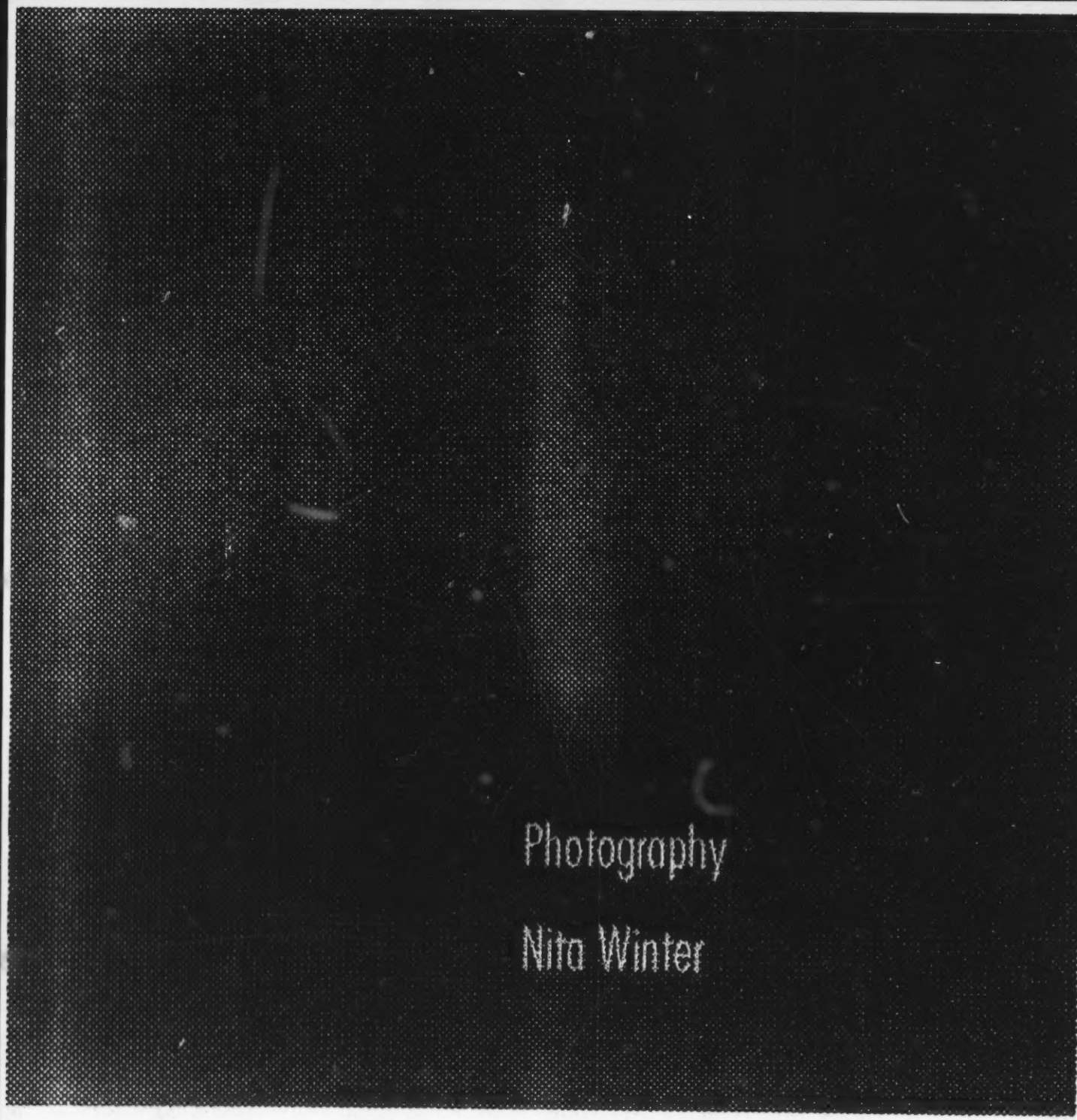

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